United Nations S/PV.6285

Security Council

Sixty-fifth year

Provisional

6285th meeting

Thursday, 18 March 2010, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Issoze-Ngondet	(Gabon)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Barbalić
	Brazil	Mrs. Viotti
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Lebanon	Mr. Salam
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Nigeria	Mr. Onemola
	Russian Federation	Mr. Kuzmin
	Turkey	Mr. Apakan
	Uganda	Mr. Mugoya
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Rice

Agenda

Date of election to fill a vacancy in the International Court of Justice (S/2010/136)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

10-27754 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Date of election to fill a vacancy in the International Court of Justice (S/2010/136)

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2010/141, which contains the text of a draft resolution prepared in the course of the Council's prior consultations.

I should like to draw the attention of the members of the Council to document S/2010/136, which contains the text of a note by the Secretary-General concerning the date of an election to fill a vacancy in the International Court of Justice.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to adopt the draft resolution contained in document S/2010/141 without a vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 1914 (2010).

The Security Council has thus concluded its business for this meeting.

The meeting rose at 10.15 a.m.

Security Council

Sixty-fifth year

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6286th meeting

Thursday, 18 March 2010, 10.15 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Issoze-Ngondet	(Gabon)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Barbalić
	Brazil	Mrs. Viotti
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
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	Turkey	Mr. Apakan
	Uganda	Mr. Mugoya
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Rice

Agenda

International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

Letter dated 15 March 2010 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2010/133)

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10-27760 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991

Letter dated 15 March 2010 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2010/133)

The President (*spoke in French*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in the course of its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2010/138, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Austria.

I wish to draw the attention of members to document S/2010/133, which contains the text of a letter dated 15 March 2010 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, China, France, Gabon, Japan, Lebanon, Mexico, Nigeria, Russian Federation, Turkey, Uganda, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President (*spoke in French*): There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1915 (2010).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council will remain seized of the matter.

The meeting rose at 10.20 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.6287

Security Council

Sixty-fifth year

Provisional

6287th meeting

Thursday, 18 March 2010, 10.20 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Issoze-Ngondet	(Gabon)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Barbalić
	Brazil	Mrs. Viotti
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
	France	Mr. De Rivière
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Lebanon	Mr. Salam
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Nigeria	Mr. Onemola
	Russian Federation	Mr. Dolgov
	Turkey	Mr. Apakan
	Uganda	Mr. Mugoya
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Rice

Agenda

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2010/127)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-506.

10-27766 (E)

Please recycle

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Afghanistan

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security (S/2010/127)

The President (*spoke in French*): I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Afghanistan, Australia, Canada, Germany, India, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Pakistan and Poland, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mr. Tanin (Afghanistan), took a seat at the Council table; the representatives of the other aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Alain Le Roy, Under-Secretary General for Peacekeeping Operations.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Le Roy to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Peter Schwaiger, Chargé d'affaires of the delegation of the European Union to the United Nations.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Schwaiger to take the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2010/127, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Alain Le Roy. I now give the floor to Mr. Le Roy.

Mr. Le Roy (*spoke in French*): Since the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) a year ago, consensus has been reached on the need to transform the relationship between Afghanistan and its international partners to one that sees greater transition to Afghan responsibility and an increasingly supporting role for the international community. The consensus on this process emerged clearly at the London Conference on Afghanistan of 28 January.

Now, the tangible shift in that relationship must start. Concrete steps must be taken by the international community to allow Afghans to be in charge of and lead the fate of their country while providing the capacity-building and support required for Afghan institutions to take on this role, including in civilian areas. At the same time, the Afghan Government must concretely demonstrate that it can deliver on the accountability required for a real transition process to be sustainable. In that regard, we learned with satisfaction this very morning that President Karzai has signed a decree giving additional power to the High Office for Oversight and Anti-corruption. Clearly, this is a very positive development.

As also noted in the Secretary-General's report now before the Council(S/2010/127), in the midst of heightened military operations, we face a crowded political calendar, including in light of the planned National Assembly elections in September, the Peace Jirga announced by President Karzai in just over a month, and, of course, the Kabul Conference after that. There is a risk that the concept of transition, on which we have collectively agreed to pin our political and

security strategy in Afghanistan, will be overtaken by such events.

Our focus must remain firmly on ensuring that Afghanization actually becomes more than the slogan it has been thus far, and that the political calendar before us is premised upon it, with the Kabul Conference formally marking the concrete and systemic beginning of that process, most importantly in the civilian and political spheres. The United Nations, and UNAMA in particular, are supporting Afghan counterparts — who must be in the lead in developing the event's agenda — in the preparations for the Conference. We would encourage the early formal appointment of a lead ministry in these preparations, which would provide a single counterpart for all those involved. The London Conference has set a strategic path that is clear in reaffirming the international community's long-term commitment to supporting Afghanistan and equally clear in reiterating determination to move towards greater Afghan leadership. We must follow this path with determination now that we are possibly at the height of international engagement in Afghanistan with a Government that is legitimately eager to be in charge of its future. Clearly, not to do so could lead to a failure in our common efforts and strategies. That cannot be an option.

(*spoke in English*)

On 6 March, President Karzai formally requested the Secretary-General to provide technical and logistical support and to help mobilize donor funding for the National Assembly elections, scheduled for September this year. In conformity with that request and if we are mandated to do so, the United Nations and UNAMA stand ready to play a role, alongside the Afghan electoral institutions and other international partners, in supporting the electoral process by providing technical assistance, coordinating other international actors supporting the process, and channelling donor funds. If the transition to Afghan responsibility is to be reflected in that electoral process, it should be clear that the Independent Election Commission and the Electoral Complaints Commission are responsible for ensuring its transparency and integrity and should perform their mandates effectively, impartially and with the confidence of all Afghan stakeholders. We stand ready to work, along with others, with the Afghan electoral institutions and the Afghan Government towards that end.

In that respect and with reference to the announcement on 15 March by President Karzai that two internationals will be part of the Electoral Complaints Commission, President Karzai informed Special Representative De Mistura during their first meeting that he would like the United Nations to nominate such international members. That is, of course, a positive development, too.

The upcoming National Assembly elections can be another milestone in highlighting the primacy of the constitutional imperative in leading Afghanistan's future, as well as our agreed common strategy of transitioning to increased Afghan ownership and leadership. On the basis of the commitment on electoral reform agreed with the Afghan Government at the London Conference, we need to collectively support the Government in progressing on that reform agenda for those and future elections. Our focus must not be narrowly on those elections, but rather on longer-term reform.

At the same time, we must be wary of sidelining all other items on the political agenda and of allowing the elections to absorb all or most of the energy and resources of international and Afghan actors alike. On the development side, for example, we must not lose sight of the continuous need to ensure that our common efforts are coordinated and in support of the priorities — the Afghan priorities — that we have long agreed with. Some progress has been made and has been cited before, but sizable parts of Afghan territory and large segments of the population are still underserved; projects are still carried out that are unsustainable or that duplicate what is already being done by others; and, most worryingly, others are still doing what Afghans could be doing. We greatly welcome the appointment of the new NATO Senior Civilian Representative and the new European Union High Representative in Afghanistan. As lead coordinator of international civilian efforts in Afghanistan, Mr. De Mistura will rely on their support and cooperation in furthering UNAMA's role.

At the same time, as we move towards increased Afghan leadership, our collective efforts need to veer towards strengthening Afghanistan's own capacity to coordinate the assistance and aid that it receives, to formulate and spell out its own development priorities

and what is required to address them, and to receive and disburse funding where it identifies the greatest needs.

Politically, we must not underestimate, on the one hand, the importance and, on the other hand, the complexity of initiating a political process of reconciliation and reintegration. With over 70 countries and organizations attending the London Conference, there was an overwhelming consensus on the need for such a process. The Government of Afghanistan committed to developing a peace and reintegration programme and the international community to establishing a peace and reintegration trust fund. UNAMA, with its repository of knowledge and outreach, could play an important role and bring added value to the programme and management of the fund.

Clearly, talk about talks has become more than mere talk, and the rhetoric that peace cannot be achieved by military means alone is being complemented by concrete proposals and a clearer policy. President Karzai's active engagement with neighbours and regional players and convening of the Peace Jirga in April are significant steps in that respect. We should not, however, be under the illusion that the process that has started will lead to immediate results. It will need to be followed and coupled by multiple confidence-building measures on both sides and to be anchored on the common embracing of the progress achieved since 2002. While it is desirable that Afghan and international counterparts maintain a coordinated stance on those initiatives, it is a process that should continue to be Afghan-led.

(*spoke in French*)

As the Security Council will debate the renewal of UNAMA's mandate in the coming days, it should keep in mind that, while 2009 was a difficult year for the United Nations in Afghanistan, the Mission — its staff and its leaders — continued to implement UNAMA's mandate with courage and determination. Following the tragic attack on the Bakhtar guest house in October, some staff had to be relocated owing to the lack of accommodation and office space that met security standards. Despite that, as members know, UNAMA opened two additional field offices in 2009 and, thanks to the Mission's assiduous efforts in constructing new accommodation and strengthening existing premises, all staff initially relocated were ultimately redeployed to Afghanistan by mid-March at the latest.

Thanks to Headquarters support, and through a combination of delegating authority and taking exceptional temporary measures, UNAMA should be able to reduce the post vacancy rate, which increased following the announcement of new posts expected in the budget and the changes in human resources management and the recruitment procedures, to under 30 per cent this summer. A further decrease of the post vacancy rate is expected from now to year's end.

To keep on course at such a critical time for the country and the Mission, Special Representative De Mistura promptly redeployed to Kabul on 13 March, which explains his absence today. He felt it to be important that he reach Kabul as soon as possible. He immediately started a series of fruitful discussions with President Karzai and members of his Government, as well as with other Afghan and international officials, while setting out the Organization's strategy and priorities in the short and medium terms, in accordance with the mandate entrusted to it.

We anticipate that the Special Representative will receive the Council's strong support in exercising his duties as coordinator, with the help of his Deputy, the Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators, and the activities of the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in Afghanistan. As members know, a new Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Political Affairs has also been appointed. That is Mr. Kobler, who will deploy to UNAMA in early April.

Headquarters and UNAMA's leaders and staff will continue to work jointly to ensure the mandate's effective implementation for a stronger UNAMA. At the same time, and I stress this, even as we pursue and strengthen our efforts and implement the mandate in the most cost-effective way wherever we are present, without overstretching the available staff and resources, the security requirements of all staff in Afghanistan require a careful assessment of the critical nature of the United Nations operations in Afghanistan, including those of UNAMA. UNAMA's work as an integrated Mission and that of all United Nations agencies, funds and programmes must be continued, sustained and strengthened when necessary, but that must be done by ensuring that the programmes and the staff fulfil duties of the highest priority.

We thank the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) for having approved a three-month extension of the special hazard pay for Afghanistan. We will continue to seek the support of the Council, as well as that of relevant budgetary bodies and the ICSC, to ensure that staff posted to non-family duty stations, such as Afghanistan, are compensated, commensurate with other United Nations staff, for their living conditions and the situation on the ground.

An unprecedented level of international attention and resources is invested in Afghanistan, in support of priorities that have been agreed with the Afghan Government and of a strategy of transition to greater responsibility entrusted to Afghans that was also jointly endorsed at the London Conference. We must resolutely work together to take advantage of that occasion and that opportunity to make the difference that that unity of efforts, strategies, priorities and resources allow.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Le Roy for his statement.

I now give the floor to the representative of Afghanistan.

Mr. Tanin (Afghanistan): As this is the first time I take the floor in the Chamber this month, I should like to begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the Council presidency and to thank you for having convened this meeting. I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2010/127) and Mr. Le Roy for his comprehensive briefing.

Today marks an important step in the partnership between Afghanistan and the international community. For the first time since 2001, we are debating a mandate that focuses on a transition to Afghan ownership, Afghan leadership and Afghan responsibility. This transition is not an end — not an end game — but a new beginning. With dedication, patience and realism, we have the opportunity to put an end to the ongoing violence, to build a State capable of protecting our citizens and meeting their needs, and to strengthen the trust, unity and leadership of the Afghan people.

The Afghan Government has taken up that challenge. In the coming year, our priority will be Afghanization. In every area, Afghans and Afghan priorities should take the lead. We face a busy calendar that will test our strength and resolve, but, with the support of the international community, it can also set us firmly on the path towards success.

The first step is to reverse the Taliban's momentum and improve security across the country. General McChrystal's new strategy, which was recently put to the test in Marjah, will begin to turn the tide. At the same time, the Afghan National Army and Police, with intensive training, equipping and resourcing, will gradually replace the international community in leading the defence of the country and ensuring the security of its people. That handover will begin as soon as possible, and, with the help of the international community, Afghans will bear full responsibility in five years.

The military efforts will be complemented by political and economic efforts. We have the plan and the initial resources for a reintegration programme, and it is beginning to offer an alternative life for many of those fighting against us.

The second step is reconciliation, which has increasingly become the focus in our efforts to promote peace and stability in Afghanistan. In Istanbul and in London, our plans were widely supported by the countries of the region and the international community. Since then, we have engaged with regional partners at a high level to explore ways in which the region could help facilitate reconciliation and to build confidence and trust in new stabilization initiatives.

The cooperation of the region and the unity of international support will be essential, but this process must be Afghan-led and guided by Afghan priorities. In this regard, the next milestone will be the consultative national peace jirga at the end of April, which will bring together Afghan elders, community leaders, Government officials and civil society groups. The conference's agenda will revolve around three goals: first, to have consultations, understanding and agreement among the Afghan people on the need for sustainable peace; secondly, to reach an agreement on a framework for understanding with the opposition; and thirdly, to create a mechanism to pursue that understanding.

However, the security dimension is only the first part of this transition to Afghan ownership. Afghanistan and the international community have already laid out a plan to Afghanize security,

governance and development and to create a stronger framework for regional cooperation. The next step will be in the Kabul conference this summer, where we will move beyond strategy to focus on a detailed plan of implementation.

The Government of Afghanistan is concentrating on building capacity, rooting out corruption, encouraging participation, and promoting justice and the rule of law. We are also working to ensure the long-term sustainability of those changes through developing agriculture, infrastructure and natural resources, regional initiatives and improved coordination. In all of those areas, Afghans will increasingly take the lead, with the support of our partners and friends.

Finally, in September, Afghanistan will hold its parliamentary elections. As in other areas, the elections and the electoral bodies must be driven by Afghans and Afghan priorities. Afghanistan is learning from past experience to undertake short- and long-term electoral reforms to ensure that these and future elections will be transparent, credible and fair.

However, Afghanistan will need time to build the capacity to run an election alone. Therefore President Karzai has sent a letter to the Secretary-General requesting the technical and logistical assistance of the United Nations and has determined that two of the seats on the Electoral Complaints Commission will be occupied by foreign experts. Likewise, the international community's assistance will be necessary in supporting the elections with resources and ensuring they are held in a safe and peaceful environment.

The importance of the central United Nations role in supporting Afghanistan and coordinating international efforts cannot be overstated. Afghans still view the United Nations as an impartial force working for the benefit of the Afghan people and as a guarantor of our stable, peaceful future as a democratic country. Our common mission will require a great deal from all of us: realism about our own abilities and the abilities of our partners, understanding of our different perspectives and the pressures on us, and recognition that we have different timelines and different expectations. Only the United Nations can balance this relationship and ensure that the views of both Afghans and the international community are heard and taken into account.

The Afghan Government fully supports the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, and we welcome the appointment as Special Representative of the Secretary-General of Staffan de Mistura, who arrived in Kabul last weekend to begin his work. We look forward to working closely with him in the months and years ahead.

Nine years ago, Afghanistan was a broken country. The assistance and support of the international community has been a crucial crutch as the country has slowly begun to heal. Afghanistan is eager to stand solidly on its own feet, but we must walk before we can run. It will take time for the Government and security forces to build the capacity to ensure peace and good governance across the country. The continuing commitment of the international community will therefore remain vital in the years to come. But we are on the right path. We have set a clear goal, and, in a strong partnership with the international community, we can succeed.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the representative of Afghanistan for his statement.

I shall now give the floor to the members of the Security Council. I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statement to no more than five minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously.

Mr. Apakan (Turkey): At the outset, I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2010/127) and Under-Secretary-General Alain Le Roy for his comprehensive briefing. We welcome the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, and wish him success. I welcome the Ambassador of Afghanistan to the Council. We would like to commend the report, which provides a detailed outlook. We agree with its contents and observations.

The speed of developments unfolding regarding Afghanistan did not change in the past months. I therefore wish to emphasize four points: Afghan leadership, the strengthening of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and its mandate, regional cooperation, and a civilian approach.

First, the international community has started to approach the current challenges with a new perspective. This year is critical. The London Conference was an important turning point. The key

term will be "Afghan leadership" in the period ahead. Afghan leadership should be supported by the international community by all means possible. The gap between Afghan and international perceptions should be minimized. There should be a new beginning. We should empower the Afghan Administration. A political process is necessary. The United Nations should have a central role. The parliamentary elections in September 2010 will be part of this process. The new Administration should embrace the whole nation in the period leading up to the elections. It should focus on national unity and reconstruction efforts. It should reach out to all ethnic groups through inclusive policies.

What Afghanistan needs now is the strengthening of democratic values and efficient State mechanisms to combat various problems, including misconduct. A comprehensive approach is needed. It should include security, governance, the rule of law, human rights and social and economic development. It should not be limited only to military means. Four areas need special attention: comprehensive economic development; a strong, well-trained and equipped Afghan military and police; inclusive national reconciliation; and modern education and justice systems that can effectively combat extremism.

Secondly, this comprehensive approach is directly linked to a strong United Nations. The role of UNAMA should be strengthened in order to better serve the Afghan people. For that reason, we are trying to incorporate the needs of the United Nations into the current negotiations on UNAMA's new mandate. As the lead country in the Council, Turkey hopes to reach consensus and finalize the discussions on the UNAMA mandate renewal after this debate so that it can be adopted next Monday. On the other hand, we all need to help the United Nations address its security requirements. The continuation of a strong United Nations presence is of the utmost importance, not only in the coming transition period but even beyond. We should therefore all support the Secretary-General in his efforts to that end.

Thirdly, regional cooperation and dialogue should be enhanced. Turkey hosted the fourth Turkey-Afghanistan-Pakistan Trilateral Summit in January, with a focus on education. We also hosted the Istanbul Summit with the participation of Afghanistan's neighbours. The Istanbul Statement is the first declaration of the region since the Kabul Declaration of 2002 to emphasize regional ownership. We believe it provides a solid basis for enhancing regional cooperation. Regional cooperation was also discussed at the London Conference. On another note, Turkey will also host the fourth Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan in Turkey this year.

Fourthly, we would like to stress the importance of strengthening civilian efforts in the period ahead. The transfer of responsibilities to Afghan authorities should not be understood as an exit strategy. On the contrary, the international community should increase its civilian presence. In that context, we would especially like to draw attention to the relevant section of the Secretary-General's report on the situation in areas where stability is fragile due to the inequitable distribution of development aid. We will continue our efforts to fill that gap.

I would like to inform the Council that at the provincial reconstruction team (PRT) conference held in Kabul two days ago, Turkey announced the establishment of a new Turkish PRT in Sibirgan, the provincial capital of Cevizcan, at the request of the Afghan Government. Our new PRT will also cover Saripul province. We have already completed our domestic legislative requirements and appointed a senior diplomat as PRT leader. A site survey was conducted last week. We plan to reach operational capability in May. The Turkish civilian—led PRT will base itself on the successful experience of our first PRT in Wardak province. It will assume responsibility for health, education and development efforts in close coordination with Afghan authorities. It will bring additional civilian capacity to those two provinces and complement the ongoing development efforts in the region. It will also be ready to assist Afghan capacity-building efforts in the area of security by training the Afghan National Police.

Finally, we would like to reiterate that, in addition to our diplomatic efforts, Turkey will continue its comprehensive contributions in Afghanistan in cooperation with the United Nations.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I, too, would like to thank Mr. Alain Le Roy, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his introduction of the Secretary-General's report (S/2010/127). I should also like to thank Ambassador Zahir Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan,

for his statement today. I would also like to wish Ambassador Staffan de Mistura every success in his new responsibilities as the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan.

This debate and the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in a few days' time demonstrate the commitment of the international community to bringing about the reconstruction of that country and to ensuring that the people of Afghanistan regain full control of their destiny, as agreed at the International Conference on Afghanistan held London on 28 January.

The support that we can provide in this new transition phase emerging from the London Conference is very important, as UNAMA continues to coordinate international efforts aimed at ensuring that the Afghan Government is adequately empowered to discharge fully its responsibilities for security, development, national reconciliation and regional cooperation. We trust that during the next international conference, which is to be held in the spring in Kabul, the Government of Afghanistan will put forward specific measures that will help strengthen the country's institutions and the rule of law, in particular by combating corruption and impunity.

My delegation concurs with the report of the Secretary-General to the effect that, during the new stage that has emerged through renewed international momentum, UNAMA must intensify its efforts to implement its mandate while focusing on three main areas. First, it must support the Government's capacity to coordinate with the international community. Secondly, in the area of elections, is must provide support politically and to institutions by means of the Independent Electoral Commission, specifically to strengthen national capacities. And, thirdly, it must continue to exercise its good offices to support the implementation of Afghan reconciliation programmes. All that must be led by the Afghan Government itself and be in line with its national priorities.

With regard to security, we regret the fact that, once again, the Secretary-General's report tells of an increase in violent incidents over the figures for previous years. The year 2009 marked the greatest losses of civilian lives since 2001. There is no denying that these statistics reveal that insecurity continues to be the main factor hampering progress in Afghanistan. In that regard, we believe that continued civilian oversight of international forces must remain a crucial condition to completing the efforts they have undertaken.

We also reiterate our total repudiation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We condemn any attack against civilians, humanitarian and United Nations personnel and journalists. We trust that communication and coordination between the representative of the Secretary-General, Afghan forces and the International Security Assistance Force will lead to a reduction in civilian loss of life and an improvement in the country's security.

We also recognize that the peace and reintegration programme that has been announced by President Karzai to promote the reintegration into society of anti-Government elements desiring to lay down their weapons heralds a message of reconciliation and dialogue, which is so necessary given the country's circumstances. However, that must be carefully considered to ensure that all guarantees necessary for the country's development are successfully fulfilled.

We commend the joint initiatives undertaken, in particular, by the Governments of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan to combat the production, trafficking and consumption of drugs in the region. Through this focus on shared responsibility, they will contribute to generating mutual confidence and promoting joint strategies to combat the scourge, and will certainly have a direct impact on the security situation in the region.

Given the promulgation of the law on public amnesty and national stability to pardon the perpetrators of serious crimes, including serious violations of human rights, we emphasize that the fight against impunity has a fundamental role in national reconciliation, as does the observation of pertinent international law. We also believe that it is of primary importance to address the needs of the roughly 296,000 internally displaced persons and that they be given the opportunity to return to their places of origin in an atmosphere of reconciliation and full respect for their fundamental human rights.

Lastly, with respect to elections, it is important to endeavour to apply all the lessons learned during the presidential elections of August 2009 in order to ensure the credibility and transparency of the forthcoming parliamentary elections. To this end, we would urge,

first, the appointment of a new Electoral Complaints Commission; secondly, the adoption of measures to assert the independence of the Independent Election Commission; thirdly, the launch of an investigation, pursuant to Afghan electoral law, of alleged fraud in the most recent elections; and fourthly, the guaranteed participation of women and minorities.

We fully believe that the elections scheduled for the second part of the year will provide a new opportunity for the Government of Afghanistan, with the support of the international community, to reinforce its commitment to the priorities of the country and to its people.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Alain Le Roy for his presentation and Ambassador Zahir Tanin for his remarks. We wish the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Staffan de Mistura, every success.

Since our latest debate on Afghanistan (see S/PV.6255), important steps have been taken to review and enhance the relationship between Afghanistan and the international community. The Istanbul and London conferences helped translate the word "Afghanization" into clear commitments. The months ahead of us, with the Peace Jirga, the Kabul conference and the September parliamentary elections, will provide an occasion for all stakeholders to implement such commitments.

Today, I would like to address three aspects of the situation concerning Afghanistan and the role of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA): the security situation, the political process, including elections and reconciliation, and aid coordination.

The fact that 2009 was the most violent year in Afghanistan since 2001 is a matter of serious concern. The current international military surge is taking place in a very volatile environment, where clearing areas of militants is not the hardest task when compared to the daunting job of laying the foundations for long-term stability.

Afghan civilians continue to bear the brunt of the conflict. The vast majority of them are victims of Al-Qaida, the Taliban and armed opposition groups. We welcome the efforts of pro-Government forces in 2009 that led to a reduction in the number of civilian deaths caused by such forces. We are confident that more will be done to further reduce such casualties.

As is widely recognized, the ultimate solution to the Afghan conflict will not be found on the battlefield, but through a political process. The London communiqué showed strong international support for the reconciliation and reintegration policy announced by President Karzai in his inauguration address. Such a process must surely be led by Afghanistan. UNAMA can play a role, if and as requested by Kabul.

Progress in national reconciliation should go hand in hand with progress in consolidating democracy. To that end, it is necessary to create conditions to ensure that the difficulties during last year's elections do not recur in the upcoming parliamentary elections and beyond. It is natural and desirable that the Afghan authorities progressively should regain full leadership of the electoral and democratic process. In so doing, they must ensure free, fair and credible elections.

Stability also depends on the ability of the Afghan Government, with the support of the international community, to deliver socio-economic development. The strategy to enhance governance and provide development aid to liberated areas is therefore wise. All efforts must be made to fully implement that strategy.

The importance of coordinating international assistance to Afghanistan and UNAMA's role in such coordination has been stressed time and again. Some progress has been made in this area, but much more remains to be done. A strong political will is needed in donor countries to allow for their collective assistance to be coordinated by the United Nations and the Afghan Government. It may not be easy, but it is indispensable, including to ensuring their effectiveness.

Just as importantly, UNAMA's mandate as the primary coordinator of international civilian efforts in Afghanistan should be discharged in a way that builds the capacity of Afghan institutions and promotes social and economic development. It is worrying in this regard that a significant portion of the international aid to Afghanistan has not even been brought to the attention of the Afghan Government, let alone aligned with the Afghan National Development Strategy. It is also troubling that the aid remains geographically imbalanced. If this situation persists, it may undermine the recent progress made by the Afghan authorities to

refocus the Afghan National Development Strategy and to improve revenue collection and economic growth.

The second half of 2009 highlighted the outstanding challenges to building a stable and prosperous Afghanistan. At the end of last year and the beginning of 2010, the focus was on reorienting strategies and expressing commitments to address those challenges. Let us hope that the months ahead will bring such efforts to fruition.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I would like to thank Under-Secretary-General Alain Le Roy for his briefing on the situation in Afghanistan. China expresses its readiness to fully support the work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and of the newly appointed Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Staffan de Mistura, who has already taken up his duties in Afghanistan.

Last year, Afghanistan successfully held presidential elections, representing a major step forward towards governance by the Afghan people of their country. Thanks to the joint efforts of the Afghan Government and the international community, positive results were achieved at the international conferences on Afghanistan in Istanbul and London earlier this year. Now that Afghanistan has entered a critical transition phase, the international community should remain focused on that country, increase support and assistance, and lay the groundwork for full transition to governance by the Afghan people through the enhancement of Afghanistan's sovereignty, autonomy and capacity for development.

The turbulent security situation is a prominent challenge to Afghanistan's reconstruction. Integrated approaches should be adopted to improve the security situation there. While working to strengthen the capacity of the Afghan army and police, the international community must also further advance the process of national reconciliation led by the Afghan Government so as to consolidate and expand the political basis for achieving peace and stability. The transfer of security responsibilities to the Afghan Government should be carried out in a progressive, prudent and well-planned way under the precondition of ensuring the security and stability of the country.

The key to the long-term security and stability of Afghanistan lies in the development of its economy and the improvement of people's lives. The further implementation of the Afghan National Development Strategy has led to a recovery of its agriculture, an increase in foreign investment, the rapid growth of its economy and the steady rise of Government revenue. The international community should further increase support for the implementation of the National Development Strategy so that more Afghans can benefit from the development dividend. Donors and relevant international agencies should respect the autonomy of Afghanistan in economic reconstruction and encourage the enthusiasm and initiative of the Afghan Government and people.

We support the country by providing more assistance to the Afghan Government in order to enhance its capacity for self-development. We support the United Nations continued leading and coordinating role in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. We highly appreciate the outstanding performance of UNAMA in fulfilling its mission under extremely difficult conditions, and support the extension of its mandate for another year.

The parliamentary elections in Afghanistan are scheduled to take place in September, and we hope that they will be held successfully. We support UNAMA's provision of necessary electoral assistance in accordance with its mandate.

As a friendly neighbour of Afghanistan, China has actively supported, participated in and promoted the peaceful reconstruction of Afghanistan. China has already invited President Karzai to visit China from 21 to 25 March 2010. I believe that this visit will achieve positive results.

In the future, China will continue to support Afghanistan within the limits of its capabilities. We believe that, with the energetic support of the international community and through their own efforts, the Afghan Government and people will eventually reach the goal of peace and stability, independence and self-reliance, development and progress, and friendship and good relations with its neighbours.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (Austria): I wish to thank Under-Secretary-General Le Roy for his briefing. Let me also welcome the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Ambassador Zahir Tanin, to this table and thank him for his important contribution.

Austria aligns itself with the statement to be made later in this debate by the representative of the European Union.

The London Conference has initiated a new phase of transition to greater Afghan leadership and responsibility. It has also set the agenda for the Kabul conference in June, which is expected to focus on a reform-oriented nation-building agenda. We agree with the Secretary-General's view that, in this process of transition, it is essential to take into account the concerns of the Afghans. In this spirit, Austria and the Liechtenstein Institute at Princeton University organized the Afghanistan Implementation Colloquium in Austria at the end of February, which brought together a significant number of Afghans and international experts. We believe that the results of those discussions can prove useful in the preparation of the Kabul conference, and we will share them with partners.

As to the parliamentary elections to be held in September, effective electoral reform, building on the commitments made at the London Conference, will be critical to ensuring that the elections can contribute to the consolidation of democracy in Afghanistan. We also hope that measures to facilitate the participation of women and minorities, both as candidates and voters, will be put in place.

We encourage the Government of Afghanistan to accelerate the implementation of the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan and to foster the process of integrating women into political, economic and social life.

Following President Karzai's inauguration speech of November and the London Conference, the concepts of reintegration and reconciliation have moved to the forefront of attention. There is no purely military solution to the conflict in Afghanistan. We believe that both reintegration and reconciliation should be fully Afghan-led and must respect the Constitution as well as international commitments. Furthermore, broad involvement by and consensus among all relevant stakeholders of the Afghan political system will be critical. Women's participation in the reconciliation process — in line with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000) — will be of particular importance for achieving sustainable peace. We therefore hope that the national Peace Jirga scheduled for the end of April will be prepared in a transparent and inclusive manner, engaging all relevant segments of Afghan society. Any genuine reconciliation process will have to be complemented by accountability for serious crimes of the past.

As the Secretary-General has pointed out, the Security Council's recent decision to remove five former Taliban officials from the list established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1267 (1999) was welcomed in Afghanistan as a confidence-building measure and can help lay the foundations for an eventual political process. We take note of the Secretary-General's evaluation that further confidence-building measures would be useful. In this context, as Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999), I look forward to cooperating with the Afghan authorities and the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in ensuring the full implementation of resolutions 1267 (1999), 1822 (2008) and 1904 (2009), including in the framework of the ongoing efforts to update the consolidated list and, more specifically, through the current review process.

The negative impact of the security situation on the protection of civilians remains a major challenge. The fact that last year saw the highest number of civilian casualties since 2001 is deeply worrying, with the Taliban and other extremist groups being responsible for, by far, the greatest number of civilian deaths. At the same time, we wish to welcome the progress made by the International Security Assistance Force and other international forces in significantly reducing the number of civilian casualties in the context of their operations, and hope that these efforts will be further pursued.

We believe that regional cooperation will be crucial to the stability and prosperity of Afghanistan. All of Afghanistan's neighbours ought to be included and take part in this process. We would like to encourage intensified confidence-building and cooperation in economic and political terms, as well as mutual assistance in the fight against drugs, terrorism and criminality. We are pleased to see UNAMA provide support to such regional cooperation in accordance with its mandate.

Austria also appreciates the activities undertaken by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to facilitate regional cooperation, such as the Paris Pact Initiative, the Rainbow Strategy, and the development

of regional programmes for Afghanistan and its neighbours.

In view of the challenges ahead for Afghanistan during the coming months, we are convinced that UNAMA will continue to play a key role in support of the Government. We therefore support the extension of UNAMA's mandate for another 12 months, with the modifications suggested by the Secretary-General in order to increase the effectiveness and impact of the Mission's work. Austria is looking forward to working with the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and wishes him every success in his important and challenging tasks.

Mr. De Rivière (France) (*spoke in French*): The representative of the European Union will shortly make a statement, with which France aligns itself. Allow me to add a few complementary observations.

After a difficult 2009, the first few months of 2010 have given us some reason to hope for an improvement in the situation. Afghanistan and the international community agreed on a credible road map at the London Conference, based on an accelerated undertaking by Afghans of their sovereign responsibilities. The commitments undertaken by President Karzai and his Government on an ambitious reform programme and the announcement of a reconciliation and reintegration process provide a solid foundation for that transition. In terms of military issues, the new strategy developed by General McChrystal is beginning to bear fruit and is highlighting the weaknesses of the armed rebellion, which does not enjoy the support of the people. Finally, at the regional level, more positive dynamics between Afghanistan and its neighbours have made the fight against terrorism more effective.

However, these developments are still fragile. In order to consolidate the prospects for recovery, it is essential to quickly implement the reform plans that President Karzai announced to enable Afghan institutions to fully take on their new responsibilities.

The United Nations has the legitimacy, impartiality and expertise that make it an essential actor in this new phase. The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has a key role to play. We welcome the appointment of Mr. De Mistura at the head of UNAMA. We have full confidence in his ability to take on the role of representative of the entire international community to the Afghan people in an effective and dynamic manner. In so doing, he can rely on the new special representative of the European Union and the new NATO civilian representative. Their strengthened competencies will help make the international efforts in support of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General more coherent.

We expect the United Nations to actively support the transition process undertaken in London. In this respect, the mandate renewal provides us with an opportunity to spell out the priorities of the mission. We see three priorities.

First, political good offices are the cornerstone of the mandate. The Special Representative must, in particular, pursue continued dialogue with President Karzai and the other political stakeholders regarding the implementation of the mutual commitments undertaken in London. In this respect, the initial contacts established between the Special Representative and President Karzai are encouraging. UNAMA will also have an active role to play in supporting the Government in its reconciliation and reintegration programme. That programme will need to be implemented within the framework of the Constitution and in strict observance of democratic values and norms.

Secondly, UNAMA will also have to commit itself to supporting the electoral process. Lessons must be learned from the problems that faced the presidential elections. Reforms are needed before the September parliamentary elections. The legitimacy of the efforts by the Afghan Government and the international community requires that these elections be held under the best possible conditions. The Special Representative will have an important role to play in forging a consensus between the Government and the major Afghan political stakeholders, including opposition leaders, on all of these reforms.

Thirdly, UNAMA must pursue the efforts it has undertaken since the International Conference in Support of Afghanistan, held in Paris in June 2008, to reinforce the efficiency and consistency of aid. As highlighted in the Secretary-General's report (S/2010/127), this role must more clearly support the Afghan authorities, who have the primary responsibility for coordinating aid.

France would like to thank Turkey for the draft resolution presented to Security Council members, which fully reflects its priorities.

The crisis in Afghanistan cannot be addressed independently from the crisis in the region, primarily in Pakistan. The Pakistani Government is courageously combating the scourge of terrorism. The international community must support it and encourage it to strengthen its efforts against all terrorist groups.

In addition, regional dialogue and cooperation must receive increased attention. Important initiatives have recently been taken in this regard. France welcomes in particular the lead role played by Turkey. To go further, we would like to see a mechanism established dedicated to follow-up to and promotion of regional dialogue. The United Nations, given its impartiality, is well placed to bring together all the regional actors to achieve the common objective of stability in the region. We urge UNAMA to become actively involved in that area.

In conclusion, I wish to recall an essential point. The transition period under way in Afghanistan does not mean a withdrawal of the international community, much less an abandonment. In any case, as President Sarkozy has several times reiterated, France will remain committed as long as necessary and as long as Afghans want us to be.

Ms. Rice (United States of America): I thank Under-Secretary-General Le Roy for his comprehensive briefing and Ambassador Tanin for his important remarks and his leadership here.

Allow me to start by underscoring the full support of the United States for the critical role of the United Nations in Afghanistan. We are deeply grateful to the dedicated men and women of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and of the many United Nations agencies, who have demonstrated their deep commitment to helping the Afghan people achieve stability and develop democratic institutions in the face of enormous challenges.

Two months ago in London, the international community demonstrated its support for the Afghan Government's agenda, as outlined by President Karzai in his inaugural address. Underlying our commitment is the recognition that Afghanistan and the international community are entering into a new phase of partnership on the way to full Afghan ownership. To ensure that the efforts of the international community are effective, the United Nations will have to continue to play a key role in promoting coordination and unity of effort.

The United States very much welcomes the appointment of Special Representative Staffan de Mistura and reiterates its strong support for him and UNAMA as he takes up his important assignment. We look forward to working closely with the new Special Representative to achieve our shared goal of assisting the people of Afghanistan to transform and strengthen their own society and ensure their own security. Upon his arrival, Special Representative De Mistura committed UNAMA to work to

> "assist both the stability and socioeconomic improvement of the Afghan people, remembering it should be Afghan-led and Afghan-owned, with total respect for their own sovereignty and independence".

We agree with that commitment, and we look forward to supporting UNAMA in its work.

We also look forward to seeing UNAMA take a re-energized, central role in coordinating humanitarian assistance among the United Nations agencies and in coordinating assistance among the donor Governments through improved mechanisms and increased staffing. For our part, the United States will continue to work to improve its coordination with the United Nations and other donors, and we would welcome steps by others to do the same. We believe that UNAMA will work closely with the Government of Afghanistan to ensure that this assistance supports the Government's agenda and priorities and builds government capacity at all levels.

The international community is committed to strengthening the Afghan Government's capacity and supporting its goal of taking responsibility for its own development, governance and security priorities. United States civilian officials are partnering with Afghans to develop and implement governance, economic development, rule of law and agricultural initiatives. UNAMA has a continued critical role to play in the process of transitioning towards greater responsibility for the Afghan Government, including helping to develop provincial benchmarks on development, governance and the rule of law as the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and the Afghan Government make provincial transition decisions.

The Afghan Government has announced plans for a transition to Afghan-led security responsibility. We are already making progress together on that front. Current ISAF operations in Helmand province, conducted at the request of the Afghan Government and the province's governor, have been conducted with an unprecedented degree of Afghan planning and leadership. Key Afghan security and service-delivery ministries in Kabul, and their subordinate departments in Helmand, have worked to ensure that governance and development efforts immediately follow security operations. The Afghan Government installed a deputy district governor for Marjah and his team on 23 February, just 10 days after security operations were launched. Kabul continues to staff up critical positions in service-delivery ministries to help roll out essential services.

But the real test will be the Afghan Government's ability to meet the expectations of the local population. We are determined to help the Afghan authorities succeed. As security improves and the Afghan Government assumes greater security responsibilities, the United States stands ready to support Afghan-led initiatives to stabilize local areas by providing a path for insurgent commanders and fighters to leave the battlefield. As President Obama has said, "We will support efforts by the Afghan Government to open the door to those Taliban who abandon violence and respect the human rights of their fellow citizens".

We urge the United Nations to continue to play a strong role in ensuring the involvement of women in every stage of that process and in working with the Afghan Government to ensure that women's rights and human rights are preserved and promoted.

Finally, the Afghan Government's announcement of national legislative elections later this year presents another opportunity to improve governance and strengthen institutions. However, we remain concerned about the electoral decree issued by the President in February. It is vital that the Afghan people be able to have faith in the credibility and legitimacy of the 2010 legislative elections. Thus, the independence and credibility of Afghanistan's electoral institutions are of paramount importance. For example, the Electoral Complaints Commission will be enhanced if its members, both Afghan and foreign, are able to conduct their activities in an impartial and independent manner.

We welcome the Afghan Government's commitments to ensuring the integrity of the 2010 parliamentary elections and to working closely with the United Nations to build on the lessons learned from the 2009 elections in order to deliver improvements to the electoral process in 2010 and beyond. Demonstrable progress in establishing independent and effective electoral institutions will be key to sustaining confidence in the upcoming election and its results. Our own ability to provide assistance through the elections cycle will depend significantly on progress in establishing more effective and honest governance.

The commitment we share with the Government of Afghanistan, which was expressed most recently in London, provides renewed direction for our efforts. The Government's plan to host an international conference in Kabul later this year will enable us to hear its detailed action plans and its targets for implementing its agenda.

This will be a critical year for Afghanistan. We look forward to strengthening our common efforts.

Mr. Barbalić (Bosnia and Herzegovina): Let me begin by expressing my gratitude to Mr. Alain Le Roy, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, for his briefing, as well as to Ambassador Tanin for his remarks. I also wish to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the current situation in Afghanistan (S/2010/127). We would like to take this opportunity to welcome the appointment of Mr. Staffan de Mistura as Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan. We wish him every success in his work.

Bosnia and Herzegovina also aligns itself with the statement to be delivered later on behalf of the European Union.

In the light of the latest key developments in Afghanistan and the various important challenges that the international community and Afghan authorities will face in the near future, Bosnia and Herzegovina commends the high level of intensity in recent diplomatic activities aimed at helping Afghanistan and its institutions. Our delegation therefore appreciates the organization and outcomes of the Conference on Afghanistan held in London on 28 January. Bearing in mind the importance of regional cooperation for the achievement of the long-term goal of a stable and democratic Afghanistan, we also emphasize the significance of the summit on the theme "Friendship and Cooperation in the Heart of Asia", which was held

in Istanbul on 26 January. We also look forward to the conference in Kabul scheduled for spring. That conference is a very encouraging sign, as it will be the first high-level meeting hosted by the Afghan Government.

At the outset, Bosnia and Herzegovina would like to emphasize its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and national unity of Afghanistan, as well as its support for all of Afghanistan's efforts aimed at rebuilding the country and achieving sustainable peace and constitutional democracy. We expect that the United Nations will continue to play a central and impartial coordinating role in promoting peace and stability in Afghanistan, jointly with the Government, in order to implement the Afghanistan Compact.

However, we are deeply concerned about the humanitarian and security situation in the country. We condemn the increased attacks on civilians, humanitarian workers and Afghan and international forces.

Bosnia and Herzegovina believes that current efforts to promote and establish the process of democratic transformation in Afghanistan deserve strong support from the international community. In that regard, we are convinced that several issues are of fundamental importance.

First, it is evident that the organization of parliamentary elections in September will be a great challenge, not only for Afghan institutions but also for the international community. We strongly encourage the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) to provide overall political coordination of the international support for the elections. The elections should not lead us to forget the necessity of future long-term electoral reform. We endorse the efforts of the United Nations to continue to assist the Afghan Government in that essential work. In order to have an independent, impartial and credible electoral process, it continues to be important to facilitate and encourage the cooperation of the international community and Afghan authorities to ensure a conducive environment for the upcoming elections.

Bosnia and Herzegovina would also like to underscore the crucial importance of the roles of the Independent Election Commission and the Electoral Complaints Commission. We are convinced that they play fundamental roles in the electoral process in Afghanistan, and thus we stress the importance of safeguarding their independence and transparency.

We consider the participation of all segments of Afghan society in those elections to be of great importance for the democratic transformation of the country. We strongly support the measures aimed at improving the participation of women and minorities. We also welcome the efforts made to accelerate the implementation of the national plan for women. Our delegation encourages the Afghan Government's continuing efforts in that direction, as we believe that women's participation can only bolster the Government's capacity to find solutions to numerous challenges that Afghan society will have to deal with in the future.

Secondly, Bosnia and Herzegovina attaches great importance to UNAMA's role in providing good offices to the Afghan Government, in particular in the area of reconciliation. We believe that there is no alternative to the dialogue between the Afghan Government and opposition forces. In that regard, we support the reintegration process and commend the proposal to establish a donor-funded peace and reintegration trust fund that would provide employment and financial incentives for insurgents who wish to renounce violence. We believe that such instruments are of crucial importance to future social and political cohesion within Afghan society.

Thirdly, our delegation recognizes the importance and necessity of the leading role of UNAMA in coordinating international humanitarian aid. At the same time, we encourage UNAMA to include and consult Afghans and to work through Afghan institutions in the implementation of projects. We would like to see the Afghan Government play a greater coordinating role, as that is one of the pragmatic and concrete ways to support the process of transition to Afghan leadership.

Fourthly, Bosnia and Herzegovina firmly supports the return of internally displaced persons in Afghanistan. We would like to express our concern about the estimated 296,000 such people, as indicated in the latest report of the Secretary-General. Our own experience in the post-war period allows us to insist that these returns are essential to building a democratic society and to re-establishing a climate of security and confidence among citizens. We welcome all efforts made in this direction.

We would also like to encourage the Government of Afghanistan to continue with its positive achievements in the implementation of the mine action programme, with the support of the United Nation and all relevant actors.

We believe that the aforementioned activities and commitments constitute important steps towards the new transition phase emphasized and announced in the London communiqué and aimed at encouraging Afghan-led leadership and ownership in different areas.

Finally, Bosnia and Herzegovina supports the renewal of the UNAMA's mandate for an additional 12 months.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2010/127) and Under-Secretary-General Alain Le Roy for his comprehensive briefing this morning. I should also like to welcome the positive remarks made by Ambassador Tanin.

The report of the Secretary-General outlines clearly the progress made towards Afghanistan's becoming a secure, stable and prosperous nation. We remain firmly committed to this goal. But the report also sets out the scale of the challenges that remain.

As this is the first time the Council has formally discussed Afghanistan since his appointment, let me like others welcome Staffan de Mistura as the Special Representative of the Secretary-General. He has the United Kingdom's full support. We encourage him to maximize his time on the ground in Afghanistan in order to strengthen the United Nations leadership. We welcome the progress already made in filling vacant posts in the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), and stand ready to support further recruitment efforts.

The United Kingdom also welcomes the appointments of the NATO Senior Civilian Representative and the European Union's Special Representative. Working with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, they will help to ensure that civilian delivery in Afghanistan amounts to more than the sum of its individual parts.

The London Conference in January marked an important step. The Afghan Government, the United Nations and the international community agreed a common set of principles reflecting the ambitions that President Karzai outlined in his inauguration speech last year. These priorities renewed the international community's commitment to Afghanistan and its people, and recognized a new phase towards greater Afghan leadership. These priorities will be reflected in UNAMA's renewed mandate next week.

The international community and President Karzai's Government now need to deliver on the commitments we collectively made in London, particularly in three priority areas. The first is security. As the Secretary-General's report sets out, the past three months have presented major security challenges, but the progress we have made is real. Operation Moshtarak shows the increasing role that Afghanistan is playing in strengthening its own security. We welcome the considerable efforts made by the International Security Assistance Force and Afghan forces in minimizing civilian casualties — a fall of some 28 per cent over the past year. We are working towards the day when foreign troops are no longer needed on the front line in Afghanistan, and when Afghanistan can stand up by itself to the threat posed by terrorism.

Second is the political process. Developing an Afghan-led political settlement remains a critical task for 2010. Both the forthcoming Peace Jirga and the Kabul conference are central to that effort. We support the Afghan Government in its endeavour to develop a representative reconciliation process. As my Foreign Minister said last week, the Afghans must own, lead and drive such political engagement. It will be a slow, gradual process. And to support that Afghan-led political process, and at the request of the Government, we envisage an important role for UNAMA and the good offices of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

Third are elections. UNAMA will have an important role in helping the Afghan Government to prepare for the forthcoming legislative elections. We hope that all efforts will be made by the Government to ensure that they are transparent, credible and safe. We reaffirm our support for the Government's commitment in the London communiqué to preventing any irregularity and misconduct. It is important for the credibility of the election that both the Afghan Electoral Complaints Commission and the Independent Election Commission be genuinely independent so that they can provide the proper checks and balances required by the Constitution. We therefore welcome

President Karzai's commitment to appointing two internationals to the Electoral Complaints Commission, and we look forward to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General making those appointments shortly.

We agree with the analysis in the Secretary-General's report of the presidential elections last year. A number of lessons need to be learned, and we recognize the challenges in delivering credible elections this coming September. We note the commitment in the London communiqué that the Afghan Government will work closely with the United Nations to deliver improvements in all future electoral processes, and we look forward to the Government outlining and implementing electoral reforms without delay.

Tackling corruption must remain a top priority for the Afghan Government and for international partners. As the Secretary-General's report highlights, corruption is currently an even greater priority for Afghans than security. Corruption hampers socio-economic development and undermines the legitimacy of the Government and its ability to deliver services to the Afghan people. At the London Conference, President Karzai committed to tackling corruption and to building independent institutions to drive and monitor progress. We therefore welcome Mr. Le Roy's confirmation that President Karzai today enacted legislation establishing the High Office for Oversight and Anti-corruption. Improving anti-corruption efforts will build the confidence of donors to channel an increasing percentage of development funds directly through Afghan ministries.

Finally, we look forward to the Kabul conference later this year. That event will maintain momentum in building a political strategy in Afghanistan and will enable the Government of Afghanistan, with the support of the United Nations and the international community, to articulate how it will implement the commitments made in January. Afghanistan and the United Nations have the United Kingdom's full support.

Mr. Mugoya (Uganda): I would like to start by thanking Mr. Le Roy for his comprehensive briefing and Ambassador Tanin for his remarks.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2010/127) highlights some important areas of progress in international and Afghan efforts over the past three months, but it also recognizes that much more remains to be achieved with the proper management of the important events that will take place in the next few months.

We strongly support the overall effort made during the reporting period to improve governance, the rule of law, the fight against corruption and impunity, and respect for human rights in Afghanistan. Building strong institutions remains critical to that effort, and it is the responsibility of the new Afghan Government to demonstrate leadership on these national priorities.

Significant reforms to the electoral system are necessary if future elections are to be more transparent and accountable. In this regard, the postponement of the parliamentary elections to 18 September offers a window of opportunity for electoral reform that will further contribute to the consolidation of democracy in Afghanistan.

The security situation in Afghanistan remains of major concern to the international community. We note with great concern that the situation worsened during the reporting period as a result of a combination of factors. We are encouraged, however, by the efforts to reinforce security arrangements in the main cities, as well as by ongoing security operations that have resulted in a significant decrease in suicide attacks.

Of additional concern beyond the loss of life and serious injuries is the mine contamination that has hampered livelihood activities, including access to agricultural land, water, health care and education. While we note the achievements to date in the implementation of the mine-action programme, we encourage the Government, with the support of the international community, to increase resources for addressing the impact on the population of mines and explosive remnants of war. We urge the early completion of the development of the National Security Strategy, followed by its immediate implementation, in line with the objective of transferring security responsibility to the Afghan National Security Forces within five years.

We recognize that the primary responsibility for the development of the country lies with the Afghan Government and the people themselves, but we call on the international community to continue to promote and strengthen Afghan ownership by increasing efforts to enhance the Afghans' capacity to take the lead on key priorities that are critical in moving the country

forward. We agree with the Secretary-General that that requires a good balance between military and civilian efforts. Increased efforts must be made to establish a reinforced and dedicated civilian coordination structure that ensures strong Afghan ownership and the involvement of all major stakeholders in Afghanistan.

We welcome the continued commitment of the international community to supporting the stability and development of Afghanistan, in particular the London Conference communiqué, which set a clear agenda and good priorities for the way forward on Afghanistan. The consensus generated on Afghan-led reconciliation and reintegration is very significant and is also critical to sustainable peace in Afghanistan and the entire region.

Stability, security and development in Afghanistan are closely linked to the overall situation in the region. A coordinated approach at the regional level and enhanced cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbours are essential in dealing with the common challenges that cut across national borders, while they also generate momentum for economic growth.

The fight against insurgency, and the trade in narcotics in particular, can be greatly boosted by joint efforts at the regional level. We take note of the recent progress in addressing opium production, but we remain concerned at the serious harm that opium cultivation, production and trafficking continue to cause to the security, development and governance of Afghanistan, as well as the region and internationally. We call on the Afghan Government to accelerate, with the assistance of the international community, the implementation of the National Drug Control Strategy.

We note with appreciation the ongoing efforts by the Secretary-General, his newly appointed Special Representative for Afghanistan and, in particular, the staff of the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA), who are serving in very difficult conditions to lead the efforts of the international community. We therefore support the Secretary-General's call for the renewal of UNAMA's mandate for an additional period of 12 months.

As the Secretary-General has noted, the next few months will be complex and very critical for Afghanistan's future stability and progress. The positive momentum that has emerged in spite of the difficult security situation must be maintained. The increased support of the international community is essential to maintain that momentum.

Mr. Salam (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to convey my gratitude to the Secretariat for the report that Under-Secretary-General Le Roy has just presented on the work undertaken by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) (S/2010/127), and to thank Ambassador Tanin for his statement. Allow me, Mr. President, to make the following comments.

We welcome the appointment of Mr. Staffan de Mistura as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, and we support the renewal of UNAMA's mandate for another year, with it adapting its functions to the new challenges. We affirm the importance of the United Nations playing a leading role in coordinating international assistance for Afghanistan, aimed at strengthening its sovereignty and independence.

It is essential that the Afghan Government play a leading role in the security, political and economic fields, and that the United Nations Mission play an assisting and supporting role so as to enable the people of Afghanistan to increasingly ensure their future. We call for stronger coordination between UNAMA and the other international actors present in Afghanistan.

At this time it is important to promote international and regional support in order to help Afghanistan achieve stability and prosperity. In that context, we welcome the high-level conference on Afghanistan, organized by Turkey in Istanbul on 26 January 2010, and the outcome of the London Conference of 28 January 2010, in which 78 States and institutions participated. We hope that the Kabul conference scheduled for later this year will also be a success. At that conference, the Afghan Government is to present tangible plans and programmes.

We support the certification of the provincial council elections and the parliamentary elections, which are scheduled to be held on 18 September of this year. We hope they will be transparent, free and credible. Before then, electoral reform is necessary, in particular with regard to the establishment of a credible independent election commission and the lessons that need to be learned from the earlier presidential elections. We must also identify the assistance that the United Nations Mission can provide in that regard.

Afghan military, civilian and judicial institution-building must be completed, and we must fight impunity and corruption. Women's rights must be promoted, and the Afghan army and police must be strengthened in order to ensure that they can fully assume their security functions.

We underscore the complementary nature of security and development, and in that regard parallel efforts must be undertaken to address the underlying causes of that conflict. We should foster an internal political process and reconciliation with anti-Government elements, as long as they renounce violence and respect the Constitution and all institutions established since 2002.

We are concerned about the increasing security tensions and terrorist attacks against Afghan civilians and Afghan and international forces. It is regrettable that 2009 was the worst year since 2001 as concerns the loss of civilian lives. We urge the international forces to continue their efforts to protect civilians during their military operations. We underscore the importance of counter-narcotic activities, well aware that such illicit trafficking is linked to financing terrorist activities.

Mr. Onemola (Nigeria): Let me join others in thanking the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Mr. Alain Le Roy, for his valuable briefing. We appreciate the presence of Ambassador Zahir Tanin at this meeting and thank him for his statement. We welcome the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General in his new assignment. He can count on our support during his assignment.

We welcome Afghanistan's recent progress, as indicated in the benchmark-assessment reports. However, it is clear that the challenges facing the country are enormous, spanning the spheres of security, politics, governance, economic development, corruption and drug trafficking.

On politics and governance, we note President Hâmid Karzai's commitments at the London Conference to ensuring that the irregularities and misconduct observed at the last elections would be avoided in future. The parliamentary elections scheduled for September 2010 should therefore be preceded by thorough and adequate preparations.

Electoral reforms that guarantee the independence and impartiality of the country's electoral bodies and the credibility of the elections themselves should be undertaken.

Serious reconciliation and reintegration efforts are required to consolidate peace efforts in Afghanistan. Thus we welcome the forthcoming national peace jirga of reconciliation that the Government has scheduled for April. We hope it will become a genuine platform for seeking greater political inclusiveness in Afghanistan. It is critically important to guarantee Afghan sovereignty by strengthening the Government's capacity to take ownership of the country's political and development processes.

The security situation in Afghanistan remains precarious and extremely complicated, with terrorists, anti-Government spoiler groups, the narcotics trade and regional warlords creating instability and stalling economic progress. The establishment of a national peace and reintegration trust fund to offer economic alternatives to those who renounce violence and cut ties with Al-Qaida and other terrorist groups is a welcome development. Training, equipping and strengthening Afghan security forces should be an ongoing focus.

In regard to corruption and judicial reform, we welcome the establishment of an anti-corruption unit and the appointment of judges to head the tribunals. We also welcome the reforms called for in the National Justice Programme, as well as the adoption of a draft policy on the integration of formal and traditional mechanisms into the country's judicial system.

On the humanitarian front, there is a need for better coordination of aid and the urgent resettlement of internally displaced persons. We believe that adequate donor funding for the recently launched Humanitarian Action Plan will go a long way to easing the country's humanitarian needs.

We support the outcome of the London Conference. If the commitments made at the Conference are followed through, Afghanistan will be on its way to assuming sovereign responsibility for its security, economic development, social cohesion and regional cooperation. The forthcoming Kabul conference, we hope, will build on the London Conference in order to fast-track the consolidation of Afghanistan as a stable and peaceful country.

We appreciate the role that the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) has played in managing relief, recovery and reconstruction activities and in holding elections, in addition to providing political and strategic advice for the peace process. At this time of strategic reviews, especially of the outcome of the London Conference, UNAMA has an even greater role in peacemaking, State-building and coordination. We therefore support the Secretary-General's request for the renewal of UNAMA's mandate for another 12 months.

Mr. Dolgov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We too, of course, are grateful to Under-Secretary-General Alain Le Roy for his comprehensive analysis of the situation in Afghanistan, as well as his presentation of the report on the situation there (S/2010/127). We have listened attentively to the comprehensive statement of the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Mr. Tanin.

We concur with the Secretary-General that the main results of international efforts in Afghanistan should be the effective achievement by the Afghan authorities of sovereignty over the issues of the security and economic development of the country and their gradual assumption of basic responsibility for those areas, with the help of the international community and preserving the coordinating role of the United Nations. It is precisely in that light that we are considering a number of important upcoming events, including the international conference in Kabul — which will be the first high-level event organized by the new Government of Afghanistan — and the parliamentary elections scheduled for September. Those elections should serve to further advance the building of a democratic Afghanistan and its effective Government institutions.

In the Security Council resolution currently being drafted on the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), a great deal of attention has been devoted to the international community's tasks in the area of assisting national reconciliation in Afghanistan. Today's discussion confirms that this topic is on everyone's agenda.

We support the ongoing processes in Afghanistan concerning political settlement and reconciliation — provided, of course, that they do not prejudice the achievement of long-term stability in the country or run counter to relevant Security Council decisions, including the effective implementation of the sanctions regime against the Taliban and Al-Qaida. Dialogue is possible only with those who have laid down their arms, recognized the Government and the Constitution of Afghanistan and severed their links with Al-Qaida and other terrorist organizations. It is fundamental that these principles must guide Afghanistan in approaching this very important issue. These fundamental principles should also guide the United Nations Mission in the mandate entrusted to it by the Security Council.

I would like to take this opportunity, as other colleagues have done, to welcome the appointment of the new leadership of the United Nations Mission in Afghanistan and to wish Mr. De Mistura and Mr. Kobler every possible success in their activities. They can count on the support of the Russian Federation, including on issues of strengthening, operating and staffing the Mission.

The situation with regard to the production and illegal trafficking of narcotics is particularly alarming. Regrettably, very little light was shed on this subject during today's discussion, although the scale of the drug threat in Afghanistan requires more decisive action, a transition to a new level of international cooperation. We assume that the contingents from the NATO countries in Afghanistan will cooperate even more actively with the Afghan Government on this issue. It is essential that more energetic efforts be made to suppress the flow of precursors, without which heroin production is impossible.

In combating terrorism, drug trafficking and organized crime, we must exploit more fully the potential of regional organizations, which have proved their effectiveness in this area. They include the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Strengthening counter-narcotic and counter-terrorism security along Afghanistan's borders with other countries will not only help reduce the financial resources fuelling extremism but will also promote the rapid achievement of stabilization both in Afghanistan and the region as a whole.

Here I recall that the CSTO has significant experience in combating those who traffic in narcotics in Afghanistan. One of the more successful and effective manifestations of practical cooperation in this regard by CSTO member States with a broad range of

international partners is Operation Canal, which has enjoyed the status of an ongoing CSTO regional counter-narcotics operation since September 2008. It is gratifying that the number of participating States has grown every year.

New prospects for cooperation between the United Nations and the CSTO in Afghanistan and a number of other areas have been opened with the signing today in Moscow by the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the CSTO of a declaration on cooperation between the secretariats of these organizations. As I already noted, Afghanistan is one of the more promising avenues for cooperation between the two organizations.

Russia supports the efforts of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan, carried out on the basis of the Security Council's mandate. Our practical contribution to that effort takes the shape of agreements with NATO on the transit through Russian territory of non-military cargo for foreign military contingents in Afghanistan. Russia has concluded agreements with a number of member States of NATO on the transfer of military cargo through Russian territory.

We share the concern of the United Nations about the substantial increase in the number of civilian victims over this past year. It is quite rightly pointed out, including in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2010/127), that the activities of the Taliban and Al-Qaida are driving this negative trend. That is yet another demonstration of the fact that the main threat to the security of Afghanistan and the region as a whole remains the terrorist activities of Al-Qaida and the Taliban.

The neutralization of their activities and the stabilization of the security situation as a whole are of fundamental importance in the context of the preparation and conduct of the parliamentary elections in Afghanistan. At the same time, more energetic efforts are required from the international military presence in Afghanistan to prevent civilian victims.

Russia, as Afghanistan's reliable partner, is convinced that it is through joint coordination that we will be able to achieve a sound political settlement in that country, with a lead role being played by the Afghan Government and Afghans themselves, of course. The future of Afghanistan must be determined by Afghans themselves. A possible option for such a solution could be the restoration of Afghanistan's neutrality. The historical evidence itself favours such a solution, provided that it is chosen by the Afghan people.

The Russian Federation will continue to strengthen its cooperation with Afghanistan and with a broad range of international partners for the successful post-conflict reconstruction of the country and the formation of viable State structures, including police, law enforcement and anti-narcotics bodies.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): I, too, would like to thank Mr. Alain Le Roy for his very useful briefing this morning. I am also grateful to Ambassador Tanin for his statement affirming the very strong determination of his Government to build a stable and democratic Afghanistan.

I would also like to begin by welcoming the appointment of the new Special Representative, Staffan de Mistura, and to acknowledge the valuable contributions of his predecessor, Mr. Eide. The Security Council had a brief meeting with Mr. De Mistura before his departure for his new assignment, and we support his approach, which focuses on a few areas of importance in the coming months, as the political calendar is very heavy and filled with many significant events.

Japan believes that those areas of focus should be, first, stronger aid coordination; secondly, advancing political dialogue; and thirdly, the upcoming parliamentary elections.

With respect to coordination, the London Conference reaffirmed that there is no other international actor that can fulfil the role of the United Nations in leading the coordination of international support. That is especially true at this time, when Afghanistan is in a critical period of transition towards Afghanization, and we need to seek optimal use of international assistance.

On aid coordination, we must be mindful of maintaining a long-term perspective and of ensuring that our efforts serve to promote the leadership and capacity of the Afghan Government. The success of aid coordination hinges upon the willingness of donors to be coordinated. Through the efforts of Mr. Eide, assistance priorities have been identified. The expertise of the proposed senior advisers' group needs to be fully utilized. International donors should make certain that

their efforts are consistent with the goals and priorities set by the Afghan people. As is often repeated, they should also make certain that words are translated into deeds.

Regarding reconciliation and integration efforts, we have to recognize that there is no substitute for military operations in combating those who would resort to violence and obstruct the democratic process. No political dialogue can succeed from a position of weakness, so we understand and pay tribute to the efforts made by members and soldiers of the Afghan security forces and the international forces. At the same time, in order to achieve long-term stability, a political solution must be sought even while military operations are ongoing. We welcome President Karzai's leadership and readiness to seek a dialogue with those who are prepared to renounce violence and respect the values enshrined in the Constitution, as well as to organize a national Peace Jirga.

Japan provides assistance for the efforts of the Afghan Government in its reintegration programme. Japan is especially grateful to those countries, such as Australia, Germany, Greece and Spain, that made pledges at the London Conference to a trust fund to finance this Afghan-led programme. The Afghan authorities are now working on the programme's details, and we very much look forward to the presentation of the full programme in due time. We also welcome the fact that the United Nations is expected to play a role in the reintegration programme. We hope that the Security Council will assign to the United Nations Mission of Assistance in Afghanistan (UNAMA) a proper role in this Afghan-led effort.

The third issue is elections. The ownership of the Afghan authorities must be respected in the conduct of the upcoming parliamentary elections. At the same time, we recognize that the necessary electoral reforms and improvements have to be carried out based on lessons learned from last year's elections. We therefore welcome President Karzai's commitment to ensuring the integrity of this process.

Japan also appreciates the President's readiness to work in close cooperation with the United Nations. The Special Representative is expected to play the role of indispensable interlocutor with the Afghan leadership in conveying the voice and message of the international community. We hope that the Afghan leaders will consult closely with him and that Afghanistan will continue to enjoy full partnership with the international community following the elections.

We agree that UNAMA has to be strengthened in order to meet the high expectations placed upon it. I reiterate that the highest priority must be placed on the security of UNAMA and United Nations staff on the ground. We understand that that an in-depth analysis of United Nations security requirements is under way and we are eagerly awaiting its outcome. We also acknowledge the measures recently taken by the Secretariat to accelerate the recruitment process to fill vacancies. A mission of such high importance needs to be operating at the highest and fullest possible capacity.

I would like to conclude by expressing Japan's appreciation for the work of men and women of the United Nations in Afghanistan. We obviously support the extension of UNAMA's mandate for another 12 months, with the modifications in the priority areas, as recommended by the Secretary-General.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Gabon.

In turn, I would like to thank Mr. Alain Le Roy for his briefing, which was very informative regarding the latest developments on the situation in Afghanistan. My gratitude goes, of course, to Ambassador Tanin for his statement, which, among other things, reflected the Afghan authorities' determination to abide by their commitments in the context of the reconstruction process in their country.

Since 6 January, when the Security Council last debated the situation in Afghanistan (see S/PV.6255), one significant development in the Afghan situation was the organization in London, on 28 January, of the International Conference on Afghanistan at the initiative of the British and Afghan Governments and the Secretary-General. The priorities identified at the Conference were endorsed by the international community and mark a new phase in the process of transferring to Afghan authorities the full management of their country's affairs in the fields of security, good governance and economic and social development. Gabon supports that approach and the commitment of the Afghan authorities to implementing the priorities contained in the plan of action adopted at the London Conference.

During this decisive phase, the efforts of the international community aimed at constructing this country, must be continued and strengthened. I would like to renew our full support for United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) for the central role it plays, not only in the coordination of international civilian actions in Afghanistan, but also, more comprehensively, in the process of developing the country. We reiterate our solidarity with the men and women who, within the framework of this Mission, are working in the field, especially given the constant threats to their security.

Gabon also welcomes the efforts by other players in Afghanistan: the European Union, NATO and the United States of America. The future of Afghanistan is being built today, despite the many challenges that continue to threaten the country's political and economic stability. It is thus in our interest to renew our commitment to a peaceful, stable and prosperous Afghanistan. That is why we support the extension of UNAMA's mandate for a further 12 months.

The next conference, which will be held in Kabul in a few months, will afford the Afghan Government and people a new opportunity to reaffirm their determination to build the future of their country themselves.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

Given that the Council has scheduled consultations at 3 p.m., I ask the members of the Council that we complete this meeting, with the hope that it will end by 3 o'clock at the latest. I request all speakers to limit their statements to five minutes to ensure that the Council can end its meeting on time.

I invite the representative of Canada to take the floor.

Mr. McNee (Canada) (*spoke in French*) At the outset, I would like to convey my gratitude to Under-Secretary-General Le Roy for his very useful presentation this morning.

As the Secretary-General stresses in his latest report (S/2010/127), the coming months in Afghanistan will be crucial with regard to the transition to a greater Afghan leadership. There has already been considerable progress in that direction during the last three months, with a London conference that was very fruitful and the deployment of much-needed additional forces, especially in the south of Afghanistan. It is now important for the Government of Afghanistan and the international community to live up to their London commitments. It is essential that the United Nations and the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. De Mistura, play a central role as we move toward our common goals. Mr. De Mistoura has one of the most challenging posts in the United Nations. He can count on Canada's full support.

In the past three months many Afghans and members of the international community have lost their lives or been injured. These sacrifices weigh heavily on all of us. Canada, which grieves its own losses, shares the pain of all those who have lost loved ones.

Canada looks to the Security Council to renew the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) so that it remains robust and enables the Mission to continue its work on a whole gamut of essential issues. Canada believes that the new mandate should take into account the development of the situation in Afghanistan. It should provide UNAMA with the direction it needs to continue to play a preponderant role in the coordination of the international effort with regard to Afghan elections. The mandate should also reflect the transition-oriented spirit of the London Conference and authorize the Mission to play fully its political role and its role with regard to coordination of international aid.

Furthermore, UNAMA's human resources also need to be strengthened as a matter of urgency, as its staff numbers and ability to fulfil its core tasks have been severely affected in recent months.

(*spoke in English*)

The London Conference heralded the hope for a new transition phase for Afghanistan. It emphasized to the Afghan public, as well as to the domestic audiences of countries engaged in the reconstruction effort, that the Government of Afghanistan intends to strengthen Afghan leadership in delivering security and support to the well-being of Afghans. However, the challenge is now for us all to follow up on the commitments of the London Conference.

Canada recognizes that the Afghan authorities are progressing along the difficult road of transition in assuming increased responsibility for security. That will require Afghanistan and its international community partners, including UNAMA and NATO, to

work closely together to implement a well-coordinated transition strategy that is based on a careful assessment of conditions on the ground and that provides the Government with the capacity to protect its civilians.

There are many challenges, not least of which is the increased rate of violence caused by insurgents still fighting efforts to establish a stable and prosperous Afghanistan. Canada welcomes President Karzai's emphasis on reconciliation and high-level efforts to achieve an inclusive Government. Reconciliation and reintegration will play an important complementary role to stabilization and development. Canada welcomes the holding of an Afghan peace jirga and hopes that it will provide an opportunity for substantive exchange and consultation between different Afghan communities and civil society on reconciliation.

In addition, because increasing violence has also targeted women and girls — especially those in the public sphere — it is essential that women's participation be a central feature of the upcoming peace jirga and Kabul conference as Afghans work together to build consensus on building peace.

The Kabul conference will be an important opportunity for the Afghan Government to present progress and for the international community to lend its voice of support to positive outcomes. Canada is looking to the Afghan Government to demonstrate progress in several areas prior to the conference.

In particular, the London Conference included extensive commitments on electoral reform. Canada strongly supports the need for electoral reforms ahead of the September elections, but we note with concern reports that changes have recently been made to the electoral law that may decrease the independence of the Electoral Complaints Commission. Canada stresses the crucial importance of undertaking all reforms in a transparent manner, in consultation with civil society and Afghan citizens themselves.

The international community also needs to live up to its London commitments to better coordinate its efforts with those of the United Nations and other international partners in support of the priorities of the Afghan Government. Canada urges the United Nations system and the rest of the international community to follow through on the commitments from London to enhance donor coordination under UNAMA's lead and Afghan direction, to make international assistance more efficient and effective until the Government of Afghanistan is able to fully take on this role. It will also be important for the United Nations to work in close cooperation with the new NATO Senior Civilian Representative to ensure a synergy of mandates and efforts.

It is important not to lose sight of the overall vision of an Afghanistan where a democratic Government fulfils all its essential roles, including the delivery of basic services, the provision of effective, transparent and accountable governance, the protection of its citizens, economic development and the protection and promotion of the human rights of all Afghans, including women's rights. The international community and the Government of Afghanistan must continue working together towards making this vision a reality.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to Mr. Peter Schwaiger, Chargé d'affaires of the European Union delegation to the United Nations.

Mr. Schwaiger: Thank you very much, Mr. President, for giving the floor to the European Union (EU).

The following countries align themselves with this declaration: Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and Iceland, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia.

Let me join others in expressing our support for the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) (S/2010/127) and its recommendations. The EU looks forward to working with the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Staffan de Mistura, and wishes him much success in leading UNAMA.

The European Union welcomes the fact that the Secretary-General's report takes on the key priorities agreed at the London Conference, highlighting in particular the transition to the Afghan Government of the responsibility for the security of the country and the need for more Afghan ownership of reconstruction and development efforts. We also note the report's emphasis on the balance between military and civilian efforts in the transition process, and we renew our commitment to building Afghan civilian capacity.

The EU agrees that reconciliation and reintegration are key elements of a sustainable political development in Afghanistan. This process should be Afghan-led and be in conformity with the Constitution and Afghanistan's international commitments, including those on human rights. Reconciliation should not lead to impunity. We welcome the organization of the peace jirga and the recent contacts between leaders in the region aimed at confidence-building. The EU supports the political good offices of UNAMA in that regard. We also stand ready to contribute to a reintegration fund and look forward to the further clarification of its modalities.

Transition is also highly dependent on economic and social development. As a major donor of assistance, the EU welcomes the implementation of the cluster approach intended to accelerate the implementation of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy and expects the presentation of concrete plans before the Kabul conference. The EU encourages the establishment of a governance cluster. As pledged at the London Conference, the EU will increase the percentage of its aid allocated to the sectors prioritized in the National Strategy and channelled through the Afghan Government.

Contributions to improving governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights and Afghan institution-building are at the heart of our support to Afghanistan. Through our European Police Mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL), for example, we contribute to making the Afghan police more sustainable, effective and respectful of the rule of law and human rights.

The EU notes with concern recent reports of increased restrictions on freedom of expression and continued violations of human rights, as well as the recent publication of the law on public amnesty and national stability. We reiterate the importance of upholding international obligations, as enshrined in the Afghan Constitution.

Given the lessons learned from the monitoring of the 2009 elections, the EU considers electoral reforms to be of crucial importance. Future elections must be credible, inclusive and secure and must reflect the will of the Afghan people. This should be clearly expressed in the resolution to be adopted by the Council next week.

We concur on the need for structural reforms of the electoral process. Short-term reforms are also urgently needed before the parliamentary elections, notably regarding the composition of the two Commissions and the vetting mechanism, also in order to make it possible for the international community to lend effective support to the electoral process.

As this year is the tenth anniversary of resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, we think it would also be appropriate for the Security Council to strengthen the UNAMA resolution as concerns women and gender equality, and for the Secretary-General to report in greater detail on those issues in the future. The Government could be encouraged to accelerate the implementation of the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan and to strengthen women's participation in public life, including in the upcoming elections and ongoing processes to ensure sustainable peace, stability and reconciliation.

By the adoption of its action plan, the EU has pledged further European contributions to Afghanistan's long-term development and has committed to improved internal EU coordination. The imminent appointment of former Lithuanian Foreign Minister Vygaudas Usackas as our new EU Special Representative and head of our delegation in Kabul not only confirms the strong European commitment to Afghanistan, but should also serve to strengthen common EU action and improve the coordination with the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General and the NATO senior civilian representative. Let me stress in that context that we continue to believe that the roles of UNAMA and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in civilian coordination are particularly important.

We support the United Nations plans for enhancing coordination among donors and within the United Nations system while ensuring strong Afghan ownership. We understand that UNAMA needs the capacity to deliver on this task; therefore staff recruitment should be addressed as a priority.

Finally, the EU would like to highlight again the importance of the regional dimension as the third pillar of the overall stabilization, together with security and development, as recognized in London.

The EU supports the renewal of the UNAMA mandate for a further 12 months, as recommended by the Secretary-General. With new lead personnel on the ground and the upcoming mandate renewal, the United

Nations and the international community at large can reinvigorate their contributions to Afghanistan's development. The EU hopes that the Government will seize the current opportunities to make real progress towards security and prosperity for the sake of the Afghan people and the stability of the whole region.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. Wittig (Germany): Thank you, Mr. President, for giving Germany the opportunity to participate in this important debate. I would like to join my colleagues and extend my special thanks to the Secretary-General for his report on the situation of Afghanistan (S/2010/127). I would also like to thank Under-Secretary-General Le Roy for his briefing and Ambassador Tanin for his remarks. We noted with interest and appreciation their remarks on the rather encouraging decisions by President Karzai on fighting corruption and on the preparation of the elections.

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of the European Union.

My country enjoys a close relationship with Afghanistan and its people. We are a major contributor to the International Security Assistance Force and to development aid and assistance to Afghanistan.

The London Conference has strongly reaffirmed the partnership of the international community with the Afghan people and Government. The upcoming Kabul conference will be an important next step to review implementation and agree on further specific implementation steps, in particular in the field of economic and social development.

The emphasis on Afghan ownership and the concept of transition of responsibility should be adequately reflected in the resolution of the Security Council and the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). In the context of this Afghan-led process, we strongly support an extension of the UNAMA mandate as recommended by the Secretary-General.

The parliamentary elections are an important step for a democratic Afghanistan. As requested by President Karzai, the United Nations, including UNAMA, should assist with the electoral process and with the urgently needed work on long-term electoral reform. This assistance should be based on the understanding that all parties concerned will work hard and constructively to overcome the shortcomings of the recent past. In this context, we would like to echo the Secretary-General in urging the Afghan Government to ensure that appointments of members of the relevant Commissions are made in an inclusive and transparent manner and with the broadest possible consultation across the political spectrum, including the opposition and civil society.

The London Conference decided to explore a new approach to promoting peace through dialogue. UNAMA should be ready to assist in that process with good offices upon request, including through the Trust Fund. Again, that approach will prove successful only as an Afghan-led process based on the broad support of the Afghan people. We therefore welcome President Karzai's intention to win political approval for his concept of peace through dialogue from the Peace Jirga later this spring.

The questions, fears and concerns raised by many Afghans with regard to the reconciliation and reintegration approach should be taken seriously and must be reflected in the design of programmes. We support the idea of confidence-building measures, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General, and would like to encourage all Council members to constructively support that process in the work of the Council's committees as well.

The overwhelming majority of Afghans want to continue to enjoy their rights as enshrined in the Afghan Constitution, including human rights and women's rights. Those rights should not be bargained away.

With regard to the coordination and effectiveness of aid, we fully share the view expressed in the Secretary-General's report. Indeed, additional emphasis should be put on capacity-building within the Afghan Government. The Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB) should continue to play a central role in aid coordination. The working methods of the JCMB and its subcommittees can and should be further improved.

Under the umbrella of the United Nations, Germany will continue to contribute substantially to the efforts of the international community in Afghanistan. We will raise to 5,350 the number of German personnel in ISAF missions operating under the mandate of the Security Council. We will double the number of our police trainers on the ground. We

will increase our bilateral development aid to Afghanistan up to a total of $580 million per year. That is in addition to our contribution through the European Union. Finally, we are prepared to support the political process with a substantial contribution to the reintegration trust fund.

With the new UNAMA leadership team appointed, the budget increase approved and the granting of special delegation of recruitment authority to UNAMA, the Security Council, the Secretary-General and the General Assembly have set important parameters and have paved the way for re-energizing UNAMA on the ground. At the same time, our expectations should remain realistic and focused on key priorities. We warmly welcome the new leadership of Staffan de Mistura and his team and look forward to cooperating closely with them.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands.

Mr. Schaper (Netherlands): The Netherlands fully subscribes to the statement of the European Union. We would like to make a few additional comments on the upcoming renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and on the situation in Afghanistan.

Experience with post-conflict countries teaches us a thing or two about how to jump-start progress. In particular, local authorities themselves must improve stability, governance and the human rights situation. All the while, the international community must empower authorities, and do so in a coordinated manner. That is why we agree with the Secretary-General when he writes in his report (S/2010/127) that 2010 should be the year of transition towards greater Afghan ownership.

The overriding objective of such a transition was of course the main message of the London Conference — a message directed both towards Afghan authorities and the international community. In our view, transition should be defined broadly. Ensuring more Afghan ownership of security by bolstering the Afghan National Army and National Police and by enhancing coordination with the International Security Assistance Force is one side of the coin.

It will be equally important to make tangible progress on the civilian side, in particular at local levels. Key areas I want to mention are, first, significant progress on governance, such as qualified civil servants, bolstered by an increased push in anti-corruption efforts; secondly, election reforms, both in the short and the long terms; and, thirdly, safeguarding women's rights in conformity with international standards. Upcoming opportunities to achieve tangible progress in those areas are the Kabul conference, the Peace Jirga and the elections.

We also agree with the Secretary-General when it comes to UNAMA's focus. It needs to concentrate more on empowering Afghan authorities. In doing so, UNAMA will, in our view, need to take a differentiated approach. In some areas, Afghan ministries are by and large already in charge of donor coordination. In that connection, therefore, UNAMA's role can be limited. In other areas there will be scope for a more pronounced UNAMA role. We believe that UNAMA needs to look carefully into specific areas where it can make a difference when it comes to donor coordination or the United Nations internal coordination — the so-called One United Nations approach. We look forward to the guidance of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on that.

Finally, let me underline that Dutch troops have served with honour in Uruzgan province since 2006. We have made every effort to find the right balance between our civilian and our military efforts and are very grateful for the support and cooperation of our international allies, UNAMA and the Afghan authorities. I wish to emphasize that the Netherlands is and will remain a strong partner for Afghanistan in the years to come.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Poland.

Mr. Herczyński (Poland): I would like to start by thanking Under-Secretary-General Le Roy for his comprehensive briefing, as well as Ambassador Tanin for his remarks today.

As this is the first Security Council debate on the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) after his assumption of the post of Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Afghanistan, I would like to wish Mr. De Mistura every success in his mission and to assure him of the full support of my Government for his efforts. At the same time, I wish to thank former Special Representative Kai Eide for his commitment and leadership during the past two difficult years.

Poland aligns itself with the statement made earlier by the representative of the European Union. I would like to make just a few additional comments from the Polish perspective.

The period since the last Security Council debate on Afghanistan, at the beginning of this year, was indeed an eventful one. The London Conference was the opening of the next stage of transferring greater responsibility for the reconstruction and stabilization of Afghanistan to Afghan authorities. While the international community still stands ready to be actively engaged in Afghanistan, it is important to stress the need for greater Afghan leadership. In that context, we especially welcome the commitments made by President Karzai to undertake more vigorous actions in such areas as security, State-building, the fight against corruption, and counter-terrorism and counter-narcotics efforts. We look forward to the conference in Kabul later this year to be hosted by the Afghan Government, which will serve as a follow-up meeting to the commitments made in London.

Poland closely follows the Afghan-led process of reconciliation and reintegration. The success of the peace and reintegration programme outlined by President Karzai during the London meeting will need broad support, as the Secretary-General rightly observes in his report (S/2010/127). In that context, let me recall the proposal made in London by Polish Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski about the readiness of Poland to host a series of meetings that might be helpful in overcoming the lack of mutual trust between Afghans. Poland stands ready to share its own experience in the area of successful political transition.

We are concerned by the difficult security situation in Afghanistan. We particularly deeply regret the increase in the number of civilian casualties as compared with previous periods. In that context, I would like to stress what the Secretary-General's report clearly states, namely, that civilian deaths attributed to anti-Government elements rose by 41 per cent compared to 2008, whereas measures taken by international forces to reduce civilian causalities contributed to their reduction by 28 per cent.

In the circumstances of a difficult security situation, the intensification of training of Afghan national security forces –army and police — is crucial and urgent. With this in mind, Poland will increase the number of its training and mentoring teams from 6 to 16, so that almost 20 per cent of our troops present in Afghanistan will be directly involved in the improvement of the operational capacity of the Afghan army and police.

Turning to UNAMA, it is impossible not to mention the worrying picture presented by the Secretary-General in relation to the current vacancy rate, which has now increased to 42 per cent. Speeding up the recruitment process, boosting the morale of the United Nations personnel, and increasing enticements are now essential if the Mission is to effectively fulfil its complex mandate. At the same time, we are highly aware of the difficult security circumstances that the personnel of UNAMA are faced with. I would like to underline my Government's full support for all the efforts aimed at the enhancement of the security of United Nations staff.

International engagement in Afghanistan will be successful only if we act together on the military and development fronts. In this context, let me stress that the appointments of the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, the new European Union Special Representative and the new NATO Senior Civilian Representative in Afghanistan serve as an excellent opportunity to establish effective ways of cooperation between these three major international organizations involved in Afghanistan.

In conclusion, I would like to underline that my country's involvement in Afghanistan follows from our deep sense of responsibility for the situation in that country, which still poses a threat to international peace and security. We hope that the decision of the Government of Poland to increase the number of Polish troops to 3,000 — 2,600 military personnel in Afghanistan and an additional 400-troop reserve deployable in case of emergency — will contribute significantly to the building of peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Norway.

Mr. Wetland (Norway): Afghanization is increasingly the mantra of our support for Afghanistan. Rather than being a euphemism for exit, it underlines the importance of an Afghan-led process that is responsible, inclusive and transparent and promotes the fundamental rights of the Afghan people. This is of great importance for three of the key issues being raised in today's debate: the follow-up after the

London Conference, President Karzai's political agenda, and the issue of reconciliation. Furthermore, it has implications for what we should expect from the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in Afghanistan.

First, we join other speakers in welcoming the conclusions of the London Conference and the stated need for greater Afghan leadership, supported by the international community under the leadership of the United Nations. At the Kabul conference, we must be clear about our is readiness to transfer authorities to Afghan ownership. And the Afghan Government should present concrete national programmes with tangible planning. Today, Norway provides almost 60 per cent of our $140-million annual aid through Afghan budgets and programmes. We support UNAMA plans for enhancing civilian coordination while ensuring strong Afghan leadership.

Secondly, we should expect real progress from President Karzai and his Government when it comes to reform and delivery on the pledges made in London regarding good governance, measures against corruption, improvement of the electoral laws, and other commitments relating to reform of the political system. The Afghan authorities must also move forward with reform in a way that addresses the rights and interests of women; they must bring civil society on board and they need to address adequately the national call for justice, including transitional justice.

Norway is particularly concerned about laws and decrees with far-reaching implications that recently been adopted without a wide and inclusive consultation process. Both the process and the content of the adopted amnesty law give reasons for grave concerns. Amnesty is one way of healing the wounds of the country, but those wounds cannot be healed if there is no accountability and if impunity prevails.

It is also important that the recent amendments of the election law do not hamper constructive efforts to reform the Afghan electoral institutions by ensuring enhanced consultations across the political spectrum and a credible and transparent process. The election process towards September must be conducted in a way that is seen as a step forward in comparison with the 2009 election. UNAMA should be allowed to play an active role in this regard.

Thirdly, a process of reintegration and reconciliation is necessary to achieving political stability and peace in Afghanistan. In London, we agreed to the broad principles of this process. Yet, we see the complexities when it comes to both the design and the implementation of a robust reconciliation process. The upcoming advisory Peace Jirga announced by Karzai is an important step in the building consensus to back such a reconciliation process. The process must be shaped and led by Afghan authorities, but only if there is buy-in to the process from representatives of Afghan society can we avoid national polarization and reach sustainable national reconciliation. One cannot build a country on just 50 per cent of the population. Women — and what women represent — must be taken into account, as agreed upon by this Council in the resolutions 1325 (2000) and 1888 (2009). Furthermore, the involvement of neighbouring countries cannot be neglected.

UNAMA should play a facilitating role, using its good offices and confidence-building measures in assisting with the advisory Peace Jirga and the larger peace and reconciliation process. UNAMA should also encourage closer regional cooperation economically, socially and politically.

We welcome the extension of UNAMA's mandate and the amendments proposed in the Secretary-General's latest report (S/2010/127). It is important to protect what has been UNAMA's strengths: its legitimacy, political outreach, field presence and status as guarantor for the integrity of the overall political process. We need UNAMA to ensure unity among the international partners, but we also need it to position itself both close enough to the Government and far enough to be able to speak out and to voice the concerns of the Afghan society.

Norway would like to welcome the appointment of the seasoned diplomat Staffan De Mistura as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan, and look forward to cooperate with him and his new team in Kabul. We pay tribute to the men and women of UNAMA and will continue to support their vital mission, especially with regard to their budget, recruitment and security. Without certain resources, UNAMA will not be able to implement its mandate or meet our expectations.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Pakistan.

Mr. Haroon (Pakistan): May I express appreciation for the successful Gabonese presidency of

the Security Council. I should also like to thank Alain Le Roy for presenting the Secretary-General's report (S/2010/127) and my dear friend Zahir Tanin, who sits so patiently through every meeting, hearing everything that can possibly be said around this table.

This is a timely debate on Afghanistan, with the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). Of course, that calls for a renewal of everything else that we intend to express here, but, at the same time, we cannot forget that, enmeshed in that cruel cyclone that has hit the world, the region has suffered along with Afghanistan and, sadly, the situation has affected its neighbours, especially Pakistan. Yet, I endorse and express complete support for the international and regional efforts for stability and peace.

The London Conference has, thankfully, been taken over by past masters, who perhaps might produce more expected results acceptable to a wider audience. I hope that what we call Afghan ownership will become more apparent if not for the security of the world, then certainly for the security of Afghanistan and its people. I remember Peter Galbraith when I speak of the formation of the Electoral Complaints Commission, and the technical assistance of UNAMA will further help to improve the electoral process. We are confident that the parliamentary elections this year will produce more binding results.

Pakistan supports the reconciliation and reintegration process, and I believe that anyone willing to lay down arms or to consider the possibility should be considered wholly without recrimination. However, as suggested by the Secretary-General, we must be very careful not to over-militarize the peace process, and I picked that specifically from his report. The civilian component of the strategy should be at the forefront, and the military component should slowly — and that will be the litmus test of our progress and success — support the overall efforts. At the same time, the international community must accept and realize that there is a desire not just to build what is physically visible, but also to promote the Afghan national character to one that can support itself with its head held high.

We agree with the Secretary-General's observation that there can be no sovereignty without capacity and responsibility. I think that the international community understands that, and is moving towards increasing capacity and assisting with more responsibility. With great pleasure, I announce that, in the recent meetings between President Karzai and President Zardari in Islamabad, we have further aided that process by increasing responsibility through offering 2,000 university scholarships in Pakistan to Afghans free of cost, and that, to increase capacity, we have offered to train military and police forces in large numbers in our institutions in Pakistan. I think that this will help further the process and accelerate it towards more sovereign Afghan action.

I would not like to forget Mr. Kai Eide. Yet, I would like to congratulate Mr. Staffan de Mistura on his appointment as the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Afghanistan at this critical juncture. UNAMA must play a pivotal role in supporting and strengthening the capacity of the Afghan Government to confront the enormous challenges before it. UNAMA's supportive disposition — and I stress supportive — would be acceptable to the Afghan people.

We attach high priority to our close friendship with Afghanistan, and I think that the joint declaration signed in Islamabad on 11 March signifies that. I believe that Pakistan remains host to over 3 million Afghans. That gesture, despite our own economic woes, remains close to our heart, and we carry on in whatever way possible.

Pakistan supports regional efforts for stability and peace in Afghanistan, and I think that the reflection of our desire to make the best possible use of a regional approach to peace, security and economic progress was self-evident at the fourth trilateral summit of Pakistan, Turkey and Afghanistan in Istanbul. We are also looking forward to the joint jirga, as we call it, which is the convergence of elders throughout our and the Afghan areas hosting the Pashtun race, some time at the end of April, as well as to the Kabul conference. These and other actions taken by us, we hope, will produce substantial results. And we continue to pursue such actions.

What is the international community to do about it? What is happening to that beautiful country — a paradise lost, to which brave people, including Ambassador Tanin here, return, giving up everything in life to be a part of a process that rebuilds their beloved land? If it is a paradise lost, I think that the first important action is for the international community to

quash the various rumours of pull-outs and early departure, as they are dampening and hurting the process of peace in Afghanistan. Much like Satan thrown out from the realms of paradise, the international community will have to clench its fist in defiance and, as Milton says, speak and show the unconquerable will of the international community. I believe that to leave Afghanistan alone with those national challenges is not, in my mind, sound policy.

We must also make a very hard decision. Only 30 to 35 per cent of all aid filters down to those for whom it was originally sent. The number is significantly low and does not reflect the progress that will be needed for Afghanistan.

On a lighter note, as I come towards my conclusion, what is it that we desire from the Afghan Government? The answer should be a partnership. Well, if that is a partnership, I wonder how many around this table can pontificate to their wives every morning on how the partnership should be run. Very few, I would guess. I believe we need to be more concerned and sensitive to the Afghan Government's efforts and to promote that relationship. Let them be partners and not have to hear merely what is poured into their ears over long periods of time.

In the end, we congratulate the hardy men who are our partners in Afghanistan and the efforts they are making today. Peace and security in Afghanistan are the desire and dream of the Pakistani people. Affiliation between the people of two countries is based on historical, cultural and social ties. Stability and progress in Afghanistan will have positive implications for the security situation in Pakistan. We also call on the international community to remain steadfast in its commitment to Afghanistan.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now call on the representative of Australia.

Mr. Windsor (Australia): Australia supports Security Council renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and welcomes the opportunity to reaffirm our commitment to Afghanistan and to international efforts in support of the Afghan Government and people.

In view of the hour and to facilitate the work of the Council, I will summarize my statement, which will be distributed.

We are grateful for the briefing by the Under-Secretary-General and for the statement by the Ambassador of Afghanistan. We wish him and his mission all the best in advance of Nowruz.

We believe that the draft resolution before the Council should build on the substantial outcomes of the London Conference and reinforce the central role the United Nations has to play in supporting the security, stability and development of Afghanistan. The draft resolution should endorse further the concept of constructive partnership between the Afghan Government and the international community and the shared plan of phased transition to Afghan leadership and ownership of security, governance and development for the Afghan people — the key outcome of London.

A renewed UNAMA mandate should also address the call for a better coordinated and civilian effort in Afghanistan to improve the impact of international civilian assistance, and the need for a more rigorous alignment of international assistance with clearly identified Afghan priorities, with UNAMA in the primary coordinating role in these activities.

Australia does not underestimate the significant and interrelated security, political and economic challenges facing the Afghan people and ourselves. There is a real need for much greater focus on the accountability of the Afghan Government. President Karzai has made commitments to improving governance, pursuing electoral reform, taking effective anti-corruption and anti-narcotics measures and creating social and economic opportunities for all Afghans. Australia will work in cooperation with UNAMA and the rest of our partners to help the President and his Government deliver on these commitments.

Parliamentary elections, of course, will be a crucial test of progress by the Afghan Government in improving electoral and political processes. In this regard, we encourage the Afghan Government to appoint independent and reputable electoral commissioners so that the process can be acceptable to all Afghans, including opposition parties. UNAMA will have an important role in supporting the preparations for and conduct of these elections, and we expect — in fact, as we have heard today — that the Afghan Government will work closely with the United Nations, not only to learn from the lessons of 2009, but also to

lay the ground work for elections in future. We appreciate the words of Ambassador Tanin this morning with regard to transparency and credibility in those future elections.

Australia's own approach to Afghanistan recognizes the importance of comprehensive civil-military engagement in capacity-building and development assistance, in concert with sustained efforts to strengthen security by training the Afghan army, and the details of that are set out in our statement. We firmly believe that an Afghan Government-led and -owned process of political reconciliation and reintegration is required to draw back into the fold those people who lay down their arms, eschew violence, sever links with Al-Qaida and other terrorist groups, and accept the Afghan Constitution. For this reason, as the Japanese Ambassador mentioned, we will contribute A$25 million to the peace and reintegration trust fund, subject to Australia having an appropriate role in the administration and governance oversight of the fund.

In conclusion, we support the lead role of UNAMA in guiding the Afghan Government through the implementation of international assistance initiatives. We look forward to working with the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and welcome UNAMA and the International Security Assistance Force working together on enhanced civilian coordination structures.

I also take this moment to acknowledge again the dedication and sacrifice of UNAMA personnel operating in the challenging environment of Afghanistan. We support all efforts to meet the security needs of UNAMA staff there so that it may continue to fulfil its indispensable role throughout the country.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Italy.

Mr. Ragaglini (Italy): Allow me to join previous speakers in thanking Under-Secretary-General Alain Le Roy for his briefing, and to express my appreciation to the Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, Ambassador Tanin, for his important remarks. Let me also congratulate the new Special Representative for Afghanistan, Staffan de Mistura, on his recent assumption of his duties. Italy looks forward to working with him and wishes him success in his challenging mission.

Italy fully supports the statement delivered by the Chargé d'affaires of the European Union delegation. I would like to add just a few remarks, drawing on our national experience and our significant civil and military commitment to Afghanistan.

In London in January, the international community and the Afghan Government agreed to begin a new phase in their partnership and to renew their commitment to implementing a reform-oriented nation-building agenda, as first launched by President Karzai in his 19 November inaugural speech. The military operations are no doubt essential to creating the necessary security conditions that will allow the Afghan economy to grow, create new job opportunities and enable civil society to revive itself. They cannot, however, solve the problems of Afghanistan by themselves, nor do they represent a durable solution to the conflict. What is needed is a comprehensive approach.

Thus, the London Conference confirmed the central role of the civilian efforts in the overall international strategy for the stabilization and reconstruction of Afghanistan, and shifted the focus more towards reinforcing the political, institutional and development processes and towards a transition aimed at making Afghan sovereignty real. Coordination mechanisms have been better defined, while a new phase has been inaugurated for the progressive handover of responsibilities to the Afghan counterparts in the fields of security, governance, anti-corruption and economic and social development.

It is now imperative that we all work with the Afghan Government to achieve real progress and define clear and concrete actions in view of the important events taking place in the upcoming months: the Peace Jirga in April, the Kabul conference in June, a Security Council mission and, most important, the parliamentary elections scheduled for September. We also look forward to the implementation of the cluster approach, which should allow the various branches of the Afghan Government and Administration to fine-tune their priorities, manage international funds more efficiently and better coordinate the implementation of international programmes.

The United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) must continue to lead and guide international civilian assistance; hence the need to strengthen its resources and structures in order to

enable it to fulfil its mandate. International donors must also do their part, commit to the coordination efforts, and acknowledge the respective roles of UNAMA and the Afghan authorities. The Secretary-General notes in his report that there has been "a marginal increase in donor alignment and increased contributions to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund as a result of intense coordination efforts" (*S/2010/127, para. 18*). While this is true, the current situation is far from the goal set in London to increase contributions made through the Afghan budget to 50 per cent of the total contributions to Afghanistan over the next two years. I confirm Italy's readiness to continue do its part.

We also subscribe to and are ready to make a concrete contribution to the proposal of the Secretary-General to set up an advisory group on donor coordination and aid effectiveness. We are also eager to work with the United Nations and other international partners to find an urgent solution to the alarming vacancy rate, which poses serious constraints on UNAMA's operability, and on the need to also expand its presence in the Afghan provinces. At the national level, we are encouraging candidacies for specific posts within the Mission.

We support the renewal of UNAMA's mandate for a further 12 months and believe that the draft resolution being prepared by the Security Council should be centred on the notion of transition, as defined in London. It should set clear priorities for the United Nations Mission and call upon the Afghan Government to fulfil its commitments.

Clarity is also particularly important with regard to UNAMA's involvement in the forthcoming elections. We strongly believe that the United Nations has an important role to play in assisting the Afghan Government in the preparation of credible, safe and secure legislative elections. The lessons learned from the 2009 elections must be taken into account so as to deliver improvements to the electoral process of 2010 and beyond.

We therefore encourage Afghan authorities to follow through with the commitments made. The time they have at their disposal should allow them to correct some of the deficiencies, omissions and discrepancies in the electoral law and to overcome the technical difficulties for the organization of the elections. This is particularly important with regard to the appointment of the members of the Independent Election Commission, the Electoral Complaints Commission and the media commission, as well as the definition of their mandates. It is also important for voter registration, vetting procedures for candidates — which is a much bigger task for parliamentary elections than for last year's presidential election — and the recruitment and training of personnel to be employed at the provincial level and in the polling stations.

We believe that UNAMA, with the consistent support of the international community, can take on a decisive role in helping to overcome these hurdles, suggesting pragmatic solutions and facilitating any necessary compromises.

UNAMA action should support regional cooperation — which, alongside security and development, was enshrined in London as the third pillar of the overall stabilization strategy — thus embracing the approach set out at last year's G-8 ministerial meeting in Trieste.

We also support UNAMA's political good offices to sustain reintegration and reconciliation programmes, as long as they are Afghan-led and transparent and are carried out in a manner respectful of the Afghan Constitution and with the support of the international community. We stand ready to contribute to the reintegration trust fund, as long as financing mechanisms will allow for some control over the use of the resources.

In conclusion, 2010 will be a decisive year in our overall efforts to stabilize Afghanistan. The events and processes that will take place in the upcoming months will be crucial in that respect. It is imperative, as the Secretary-General underlines in his report, that they be managed in such a way as to ensure that they reinforce, rather than undermine, each other. In fact, if well managed, these events can form the structure of a transition to greater Afghan leadership.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of New Zealand.

Mr. McLay (New Zealand): I trust that, in the interests of time, Ambassador Tanin and the others who have reported to the Council will excuse me if I take the thanks as read.

There is no doubt that today's Afghan Government still needs strong support to meet the challenges it faces, or that it needs an international

community prepared to provide that support. We are therefore pleased at the significant developments of the last quarter. I intend to focus on just three of those.

New Zealand supports President Karzai's efforts to build a new and peaceful Afghanistan. We welcome the priority that the President placed on these three areas at the London Conference in January and his personal commitment to making progress in them in an integrated manner. Fighting corruption is key to improving governance, just as failing to do so would greatly impede economic development.

Similarly, improving security is a multifaceted challenge that requires not only building up the national forces, but also providing the conditions for reconcilable insurgents to return to the mainstream and for countries in the region to play a constructive role.

In that regard, we and other contributors, the people of Afghanistan who supported democracy in last year's elections and the military and civilians who risk their lives are all entitled to expect, and to see, urgent progress on improving governance, without which our combined efforts to achieve peace will falter. A functioning and credible executive is essential to effective governance. New Zealand urges both the Afghan Parliament and President Karzai to work together to form a full and final Cabinet as a matter of priority.

We also look forward to the necessary steps being taken ahead of parliamentary elections in September to ensure that electoral institutions are transparent, impartial and independent.

As the Secretary-General's report (S/2010/127) makes clear, corruption is corrosive. Corruption in Afghanistan is corrosive: it hinders stability and it inhibits growth. At the London Conference, we joined those welcoming the Government's commitment to fight corruption, address its causes and develop benchmarks by which to measure progress.

We are pleased in particular to see the formation of the anti-corruption unit and the appointment of judges to an anti-corruption tribunal. We look forward to further measures being implemented before the Kabul Conference. In passing, we are pleased that that Conference can take place in Afghanistan, and not elsewhere.

New Zealand welcomes President Karzai's plans to promote reconciliation. We agree that this will need broad national support. However, we urge the Government to ensure that reconciliation is not achieved at the expense of human rights.

On economic development, we are pleased to see efforts to prioritize and cluster components of the National Development Strategy. New Zealand is in the process of aligning its own development support to prioritize agriculture and rural development. We welcome the current efforts to simplify the international approach to delivering development assistance. We support the central role of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) in coordinating that assistance to support Government priorities identified in the National Development Strategy. We welcome UNAMA's revised mandate in that regard.

On security, New Zealand, along with other International Security Assistance Force partners, is committed to providing a clearly defined pathway for transferring primary responsibility for security to the National Security Forces, thus allowing international forces to draw down and for a shift in the focus of international efforts to building civilian capacities. Like other contributors, ideally we would like our troops home as soon as possible. But the objective is to leave the country secure and confident in its ability to meet the security and development needs of its people.

In Bamyan province, New Zealand has already committed to the progressive transfer of security responsibility from the New Zealand-led provincial reconstruction team (PRT) to Afghan authorities. We aim to have an ambassador on the ground in Kabul soon and to move leadership of the PRT to a civilian role, to ensure better support for coherent civilian and development assistance efforts.

As many have said here today and elsewhere, this is a critical moment for Afghanistan. As always, time is short. That said, Afghanistan needs time and space to rebuild. New Zealand is committed to playing its part in providing those opportunities. But there must be measurable progress on all fronts, including governance, economic development and security, as all are interrelated. New Zealand fully respects the fact that it is the sovereign right of the Government and people of Afghanistan to decide how best to address these challenges and deliver those outcomes. But everyone with a stake in Afghanistan now knows that

failure to act is not an option. The risks of such a failure are simply too high.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of India.

Mr. Manjeev Singh Puri (India): Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I would also like to thank you for scheduling today's debate on the situation in Afghanistan and the United Nations Assistance Mission in that country. This is of immediate and abiding interest for India, both as a close neighbour and a civilizational partner of Afghanistan.

We are grateful for the latest report of the Secretary-General (S/2010/127) and are appreciative of the briefing by Under-Secretary-General Alain Le Roy. We are also thankful to Ambassador Zahir Tanin, Permanent Representative of Afghanistan, for his statement. We welcome the appointment of the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Staffan de Mistura. He has taken over at a particularly challenging time for the United Nations in Afghanistan, with major concerns, even regarding the security of its personnel, requiring to be addressed.

The international approach to Afghanistan in recent months, in particular the London Conference in January, has focused on security, reintegration, development, governance and regional and international cooperation. The forthcoming political processes — the Loya Jirga, the Kabul conference and the parliamentary elections scheduled later this year — will be important milestones in this context. If these are processes to be enduring, Afghan ownership should go hand in hand with Afghan leadership. With respect to both the military and the civilian efforts, while working complementarily and within indicative timelines, the international community must reaffirm its long-term commitment to stability, peace and development in Afghanistan.

Without tangible and sustained improvements on the security front, it would be too much to expect the Afghan Government to exercise greater responsibility. Indeed, improved security could create an enabling environment for accelerated progress on development and governance issues. This is also critical in expanding the footprint of the Afghan Government and ensuring the greater ownership of these processes by the Afghan people.

The latest report of the Secretary-General highlights the fact that the deterioration in the security situation has continued, with 2009 being the most volatile year since the fall of Taliban in 2001. Despite the reinforced presence of the International Security Assistance Force, asymmetric warfare and complex terrorist attacks have increased. There has been a spate of such recent attacks all over Afghanistan, including in urban centres such as Kabul and Kandahar, that have killed innocent Afghans and foreigners, including Indian experts and workers involved in our development partnership. Such acts of terrorism will not deter us, but will only strengthen our resolve to fulfil our pledges towards the reconstruction of Afghanistan and to cement our traditional friendship with the Afghan people.

In the interest of stabilizing the security situation in Afghanistan, it is essential to ensure that support, sustenance and sanctuaries for terrorist organizations be ended forthwith. The security and stabilization of Afghanistan will remain a distant goal unless we are able to isolate and root out the syndicate of terrorism, which includes elements of Al-Qaida, the Taliban, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba and other terrorist and extremist groups operating from within and outside Afghanistan's borders.

Therefore, in addition to the strengthening of the International Security Assistance Force, it is critical that the Afghan National Security Forces be enlarged and developed in a professional manner and at a much faster pace. They should be provided with appropriate resources, combat equipment, enablers and training before considering any plan for a phased, province-by-province transition to Afghan-led security. We welcome the expansion of the capacities of the Afghan National Security Forces and also appreciate the efforts being made by third countries to strengthen the capacities of those Forces.

Against the backdrop of today's worrying security situation, the issue of reintegration should be tackled with prudence, the benefit of hindsight, foresight and caution. We believe that any integration process in Afghanistan should be Afghan-led and include only those who abjure violence, give up armed struggle and terrorism, and are willing to abide by the values of democracy, pluralism, human rights and women's rights, as enshrined in the Afghan Constitution. The process must be inclusive and transparent.

A sustainable strategy for the stabilization of Afghanistan must focus on development and governance issues. In order to strengthen governance and institution-building, priority should be accorded to building adequate capacity to deliver on development objectives.

Presently, the overall civilian approach remains fragmented. The Secretary-General's report strikingly points out that, even after the last eight years of engagement in Afghanistan, 80 per cent of international community assistance still bypasses the Afghan Government and is not closely aligned with Government priorities. This trend must be reversed and our efforts must concentrate on the strengthening of Afghan Government institutions, particularly through the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board which has endorsed new initiatives in agriculture, private sector development, technical assistance and capacity-building.

India's efforts towards the stabilization of Afghanistan have focused on socio-economic development. The principal objective of India's development partnership, covering the entire country and straddling all sectors of development, is to build indigenous Afghan capacities and institutions. This will enable an effective State system to improve the delivery of goods and services to the Afghan people and contribute to stability.

Our assistance, now over $1.3 billion, is spread over a large number of provinces in Afghanistan. In addition to several small and medium development projects, India has built the Zaranj-Delaram road and the power transmission line from Pul-e-Khumri to Kabul. We are also constructing Afghanistan's new Parliament building, a symbol of our common commitment to pluralism and democracy. At the recent London Conference, we announced new initiatives in the agriculture sector and in institutional capacity-building.

Perseverance and tenacity are critical to effectively confronting the challenges facing Afghanistan and to ushering peace and security into the region. There are no quick-fix solutions and it is imperative that the international community remain engaged in Afghanistan in a sustained manner, providing assistance on the security side and development and nation-building support for as long as it takes. We support the good work of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan.

We need to be clear that a stable Afghanistan is in the interests not only of all of us in the neighbourhood, but for the international community as a whole.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are no further speakers on my list.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 1.40 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.6288

Security Council

Sixty-fifth year

Provisional

6288th meeting

Friday, 19 March 2010, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Issoze-Ngondet	(Gabon)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Mayr-Harting
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Barbalić
	Brazil	Mrs. Viotti
	China	Mr. Li Baodong
	France	Mr. Araud
	Japan	Mr. Takasu
	Lebanon	Mr. Salam
	Mexico	Mr. Heller
	Nigeria	Mr. Onemola
	Russian Federation	Mr. Shcherbak
	Turkey	Mr. Apakan
	Uganda	Mr. Mugoya
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. DiCarlo

Agenda

Central African region

Impact of illicit arms trafficking on peace and security

Letter dated 15 March 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Gabon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2010/143)

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10-27987 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Central African region

Impact of illicit arms trafficking on peace and security

Letter dated 15 March 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Gabon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2010/143)

The President (*spoke in French*): I would like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Australia, Botswana, the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Germany, Morocco, Republic of Korea, South Africa and Switzerland, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In accordance with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration without the right to vote in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, the representatives of the aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Costa to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Sergio de Queiroz Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Duarte to take a seat at the Council table.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Louis Sylvain-Goma, Secretary General of the Economic Community of Central African States; His Excellency Mr. Téte António, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations; and His Excellency Mr. Pedro Serrano, acting head of the European Union delegation to the United Nations.

It is so decided.

I invite the aforementioned representative to take the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2010/143, which contains the text of a letter dated 15 March 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Gabon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General.

I welcome the presence of the Deputy Secretary-General, Her Excellency Ms. Asha-Rose Migiro. I invite the Deputy Secretary-General to take the floor.

The Deputy Secretary-General: We have long known that the flow of illicit arms to Africa is largely made possible by the secrecy that surrounds it. We are thus grateful to the Gabonese presidency for convening a debate on this important subject in the Security Council. The Council has often addressed conventional weapons issues, most frequently in the context of specific crises and in the consideration of arms embargos.

In 1999, the Council placed the issue of small arms on its agenda and adopted a presidential statement (S/PRST/1999/28) emphasizing the importance of regional cooperation in tackling the

issue. Since then, the Council has repeatedly recognized the devastating impact of illicit weapons on international and regional peace and security, social and economic development, and civilians, women and children.

The Council has also stressed the need for measures to discourage arms flows in Central Africa. In the subregion, local demand continues to be sizable, especially from many militia and rebel groups. Limited national and regional capacity, porous borders and the spillover effects of conflicts in the region have impeded effective small arms control. As a result, Central Africa is awash with illicit weapons, exacerbating intercommunal violence, increasing cross-border crime and threatening ongoing peace and national reconciliation processes.

The illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons is never an isolated phenomenon. Weapons trafficking in Central Africa has complex links, not only to conflict, but also to a number of other criminal activities that undermine our efforts to engender social justice, foster the rule of law and ultimately achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The link between the illicit exploitation and trade of natural resources and the illicit proliferation in trafficking of arms has become increasingly apparent. This, in turn, has become one of the major factors fuelling and exacerbating conflicts in Central Africa.

The primary responsibility to eradicate this illicit trade remains with States. Measures taken by national authorities to promote disarmament and arms control programmes are commendable; so, too, are collective efforts through the Economic Community of Central African States. However, the challenge continues to loom large. In this regard, allow me to make three observations.

First, peace and security in Central Africa require a strong commitment by States in the subregion, together with State suppliers of weapons, to expand their individual and collective efforts to eradicate weapons trafficking.

Secondly, such efforts must include greater commitments by the States of the subregion to implement global instruments and to strengthen their capacity to identify and combat those involved in illicit brokering activities. These instruments include the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the United Nations Firearms Protocol, and the International Tracing Instrument. We also must support the adoption of an arms trade treaty at the global level and the implementation of community-based disarmament and confidence-building projects.

Thirdly, the States of Central Africa should make the best possible use of United Nations tools and expertise. The United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, for example, plays an important role in assisting States in the regulation of conventional armaments and in promoting disarmament and non-proliferation. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa provides States, subregional organizations and civil society with technical advice and capacity-building programmes, including training, legal assistance and the elaboration of regional registers and transparency instruments.

The Secretary-General and I welcome the ministerial decision of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa to mandate the Centre to assist in drafting the subregion's first legally binding instrument on the control of small arms and light weapons, ammunition, explosives and equipment supporting their manufacture. Other urgent priorities include stockpile management, the security of weapons and ammunition, and measures to control the import, export, transit and retransfer of weapons. More must also be done to build national capacities to mark weapons, keep adequate records and trace illicit ones, in line with international and regional standards.

It is well understood that weak regional and national regulatory and enforcement capacities to address illicit arms trafficking are associated with the structural causes of armed violence and conflict. Therefore, the decisions and actions of the Standing Advisory Committee are of great significance in tackling the tools of violence, designing ways to improve subregional security, and creating the conditions necessary to sustainable development. The Secretary-General urges the Security Council and all Member States to offer whatever assistance is needed to support States in Central Africa in achieving these goals.

I once again commend the Government of Gabon for its leadership in bringing this issue to the Council.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her statement.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Antonio Maria Costa. I now give the floor to Mr. Costa.

Mr. Costa: In today's world, conflicts take place within rather than between nations, and are fought with light rather than heavy weapons. Arms are acquired on the illicit market, estimated globally at between $200 and $300 million a year, which is about 20 per cent of the licit arms trade. Africa, the arms smugglers' most profitable market, suffers the largest number of casualties because of it. I am therefore grateful to the Government of Gabon for placing this topic on the Council's agenda.

Demand for military-grade weapons comes from three sources: crime groups, combatant militias and regimes under sanctions. Supply also originates from various sources: stockpiles of nations undergoing regime change, defence departments' clearance sales of obsolete weapons, and manufacturers unwilling — perhaps because of corruption — to meet internationally agreed domestic controls.

Let me begin with demand, which certainly concerns Africa. First, crime groups derive major rewards from firearms. A handful of Somali pirates can hijack oil tankers; poachers with rifles equipped with night-sights and silencers plunder Africa's rare species; cattle raiders steal the livestock of entire villages; bandits hijack aid shipments; thugs in combat uniform compel young slaves to mine rare minerals; gangs assault, rob and kidnap nationals and tourists alike, in homes and at resorts. As a result, several countries in Africa tally the highest rates for crime, specifically murder, in the world.

Secondly, by acquiring military-grade weapons, combatant militias obtain the trappings and firepower of a military force in the attempt to gain credibility, even without a political cause. Double jeopardy is caused when, most commonly, rebels fund arms purchases by trafficking drugs and other resources in exchange.

Thirdly, regimes under sanctions need arms to perpetuate themselves, irrespective of domestic opposition and/or pressure from the international community, including decisions of this Council. Arms traffickers circumvent the embargos, handsomely rewarded by authorities that do not hesitate to bleed citizens and natural resources alike to honour payments.

In these troublesome hands, even small amounts of arms can undermine the socio-economic progress of a nation, break the State's monopoly on the use of force, and create a tipping point in political or military stalemates. One need only think of how the drugged-up kids of the Revolutionary United Front held Sierra Leone to ransom for a decade, or of the destruction caused by the marauding Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda for years.

In short, illicit arms fuel the violence that undermines security, development and justice. Of the 34 countries least likely to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, 22 — two thirds of the total — are in the midst of or emerging from conflicts located in regions that are magnets for crime, violence and arms trafficking.

What about supply? Small arms, unlike drugs and counterfeits, are a durable product. An attack rifle, such as the AK-47 or the M-16, can last indefinitely; it just needs ammunition. As a result, arms trafficking tends to be an episodic rather than permanent flow, but with a predictable pattern — from countries with large stockpiles to a region descending or pushed by traffickers into crisis. Most of these regions, of course, are in the third world.

The biggest stocks have been in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Indeed, in the 1990s, these stockpiles supplied almost every conflict, particularly in Africa, from A to Z — from Angola to Zimbabwe. A combination of factors has turned Ukraine, in particular, into a major arms supplier. It has huge stocks — there are 54 firearms for every Ukrainian soldier, as against the accepted world ratio of around 2:1 — and a large surplus of large planes, including oversized Antonov and Ilyushin models. With low regulation and high economic insecurity, we get an environment in which merchants of death can make millions — as portrayed by Nicolas Cage, Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, in "The Lord of War".

How can tons of arms, in large cargo planes, move undetected? The key is corruption at source, transit and destination. Although arms are smuggled across borders — for example between the United States and Mexico — most weapons are just shipped

through commercial channels, relying on fraudulent papers and corrupt officials. Corruption at the source — known as "point of departure diversion" — enables traffickers to use fake end user certificates for legal exports. Corruption at the "official" destination enables a legal shipment to be diverted to a different location. That is called post-delivery onward diversion. For example, the tanks, weapons and ammunition on a Ukrainian ship hijacked by Somali pirates in September 2008 were intended for South Sudan, not Kenya, as the papers said.

At the "true" destination — in countries, for example, in the Sahel and Central, East and West Africa — weapons are bartered for drugs and natural resources such as oil, precious stones, metals and timber. As a result, arms trafficking and organized crime fuel conflicts, and vice versa.

In conclusion, what can be done to curb illicit arms trafficking, in particular into Africa? The baseline is to promote development and security so as to reduce the demand for arms. To reduce the supply, more must be done to improve the safekeeping and destruction of stockpiles, not least within the area of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. How to curtail the illicit arms trade? There is no need to reinvent the wheel. The United Nations Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, which entered into force five years ago to supplement the United Nations Convention against Organized Crime, provides a very strong legal instrument. I was glad to hear the statement by the Deputy Secretary-General in that connection.

The United Nations Protocol requires parties to adopt legislation to prevent gun diversion and to criminalize the removal of the markings on guns, keep records necessary to trace them, prevent the reactivation of disabled guns, promote cooperative regimes to monitor gun flows, prevent weapons theft and build law enforcement capacity across borders. Yet, there are only 79 parties to the Protocol, which is half the number of parties to the other two protocols of the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, namely, on smuggling of migrants and trafficking in people. Of course, the Firearms Protocol has some very notable absences.

To cut the illicit flow of weapons, I urge States to use the Firearms Protocol to close loopholes in national legislation, tighten up regulations on weapons transport, develop regional databases on seizures, promote inter-agency cooperation within national administrations, profile suspicious shipments and share information with other countries to verify compliance with international agreements.

But that is not enough. All crime can best be combated by following the money trail. Arms dealers in particular swing between licit and illicit business, covering their tracks through complex arrangements of front companies that invest the proceeds from crime. I urge States to implement article 52 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption and article 7 of United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, which require parties to know their customers and reveal the beneficiaries of funds deposited into high-value accounts.

Arms trafficking is another pandemic. The therapy is known and the surgical instruments are available. I hope this meeting will spur Member States to use these tools to cut the arms flows that fuel conflicts, undermine States and enrich criminals.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Costa for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Louis Sylvain-Goma, Secretary General of the Economic Community of Central African States.

Mr. Sylvain-Goma (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for inviting me to be here. I would also like to acknowledge the presence of the Deputy Secretary-General.

At the heart of a continent in which instances of fratricidal war are the subject of the international community's concern, Central Africa has been a major source of crises for the past 15 years. Of the 10 countries that comprise the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), seven are in post-conflict situations today, while the other three have not been spared the upheavals of political violence and runaway criminality. In that regard, the scourge of small arms and light weapons is a major factor in the proliferation and chaotic circulation of such weapons.

Because the source of such weapons cannot be verified, and because they are easy to use and can be easily transported, as Kofi Annan has said, those engines of untold suffering are everywhere. They can be found within families and States and along borders.

They destabilize family relations, ruin people's lives, undermine good-neighbourly relations between States and drain momentum from regional integration efforts. That is the dire picture that I wish to share with the Council of the problem of small arms and light weapons in our subregion.

In order to illustrate the scope of this phenomenon, people point to the fact that threats to the internal and national security of the States of the region far exceed the capacities of our countries and Community to eradicate them. Given their scale, gravity and widespread nature, the crises being experienced by the subregion have a cumulative effect. That includes the rise and growth of armed rebellion and criminal organizations, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, drug trafficking, massive displacements of peoples, the deterioration in educational and health systems, poverty and promiscuity.

At the level of global security, Central Africa is home to six lawless regions, all of which are part of triangular borders: Chad-Central African Republic-Sudan, Chad-Cameroon-Central African Republic, Cameroon-Equatorial Guinea-Nigeria, Angola-Congo-Democratic Republic of the Congo, Central-African Republic-Congo-Democratic ; Republic of the Congo/Congo River, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo-Burundi-Rwanda/Great Lakes region. A closer look reveals that the porous nature of the borders is conducive to allowing rebel movements to fall back and regroup. That is a structural element of the chaotic circulation of small arms and light weapons. Moreover, such lawless areas remain infested by nascent rebellion movements and host to entire roaming armies following the end of a conflict.

The technical characteristics of those weapons reveal that nearly 80 per cent of them come from either China or the countries of the former Warsaw Pact. Traffickers exploit the ease of using and maintaining such weapons, which means that there are endless sources of them. There are also numerous stockpiles of such weapons — of the armies and defence forces of States in crisis, those who support rebel movements and international arms dealers. Recently, fundamentalist religious movements in the Cameroon-Nigeria-Equatorial Guinea and Chad-Sudan-Central African Republic triangles have also been the source of small arms and light weapons.

All sectors of society possess these weapons. Worse yet, that includes women and children. This is leading to a new social conflict involving the traditional family structure. That alarming development has prompted the organs of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX) and the institutions of the international community to take action to reduce the phenomenon.

With regard to actions taken at the regional level, the heads of States of Central Africa have, through the Yaoundé process, turned to the United Nations for assistance in order to prevent, control and settle conflicts in the subregion. That led to establishment of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, in 1992. Subsequently, as a result of the Committee's work, an historic decision was taken in Yaoundé in July 1999 to establish the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa, which was set up in February 2000, in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea.

With regard to the matters being debated, the Protocol on COPAX includes the following issues in its article 6: combating cross-border crime, international terrorism, the uncontrolled proliferation and illicit trafficking of arms, ammunition, explosives and all other related materials. Since then, at the instigation of the former Organization of African Unity, the Economic Community of Central African States has been acting with a double view: responsible support to international community initiatives, and taking subregional initiatives.

With regard to supporting initiatives of the international community, the Central African States adopted, as part of Africa's contribution to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the Bamako Declaration of 2000. They established, in 2003, the programme on Central Africa's priority activities to implement the United Nations Programme.

Concerning subregional initiatives, I will note that, on the basis of that Programme, the ECCAS secretariat, with the support of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, held a seminar in Bangui, in August 2002, on raising awareness of the implementation of the United Nations Programme in the ECCAS region.

Then, from 12 to 14 May 2003, the implementation seminar was organized in Brazzaville.

The results of that seminar led to adoption of a body of recommendations that the States have committed themselves to implement. I shall refer to eight of them: establishing in each State a national commission on small arms and light weapons; collecting and openly destroying small arms and light weapons used by rebels and other armed groups; strengthening and harmonizing national legislation and procedures on small arms and light weapons; enhancing the capacity of national security institutions to control small arms and light weapons; promoting traceability by creating registers and databanks; promoting the role of civil society in combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons; implementing a regional policy of cross-border cooperation to combat proliferation of small arms and light weapons; and lastly, establishing an entity on small arms and light weapons within the secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States.

At the level of the global collective security strategy of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa, actions have been taken to address threats in the lawless areas I noted earlier, starting with the cooperation agreement on police that was signed in April 1999 in Yaoundé among member States of the Committee of Police Chiefs of Central Africa. To complete that system, the 2007 Sao Tome and Principe initiative mobilized the Economic Community of Central African States to create a legal instrument for the community to combat the proliferation of and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which will be adopted in the near future.

That approach, which aligns legal instruments with an operational approach, sees the secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States in the central role in controlling the circulation of small arms and light weapons in the subregion, along with the United Nations and the African Union, of course. The approach not only fosters harmonization and strengthening of regulations and institutions, but also insures the promotion of exchange of information for greater effectiveness of the actors in the field.

Here it is appropriate to emphasize the encouraging results attained, in barely six months, in a test of the implementation of the strategy to secure the vital interests of the member States of the Economic Community of Central African States in the Gulf of Guinea.

As the Council is aware, for many years the triangle of Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea and Nigeria has been the target of many acts of maritime piracy that have led to fears of the phenomenon of "Somalization" of this zone, which is strategic to the global supply of energy and to international trade. During joint patrols at sea and along the coast, hundreds of arms and considerable quantities of ivory, drugs and the proceeds of illegal fishing and other illicit products have been seized.

Moreover, in most States in post-conflict situations, national disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes have been implemented as part of strategies to emerge from conflict. Reducing the circulation of small arms and light weapons and controlling acquisitions and existing stockpiles have thus become a major part of the process to collect arms and to demobilize and reintegrate ex-combatants. But the DDR process is still far from satisfying our expectations, as it has not yet addressed the matter of criminal organizations, which are becoming more and more organized.

It is important to emphasize that after the conflicts in Angola, Burundi, the Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it has not been possible to recover all of the arms used in those conflicts. Taking all those countries together, one may estimate — and this is only an estimate — that about 7 million small arms and light weapons, including those manufactured and acquired, have been in circulation in Central Africa over the past 15 years. Only 45 per cent of them have come under effective monitoring or have been destroyed.

That means that a majority of the arms remain hidden for various reasons, including the possibility of a return to confrontations; illicit trafficking for commercial purposes; armed banditry, which often involves rape, hijacking, poaching, drug trafficking, pillaging of minerals and forest resources in the Congo Basin, crimes of passion and maritime piracy. I could continue. They are also used for poaching for the wildlife trade and in illegal fishing activities, where explosives are often used.

That is why disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes and programmes to combat

small arms and light weapons, usually carried out with the aid of the United Nations Development Programme and the European Union, are now closely linked to the problem of security sector reform and involve cooperation among State and non-State actors at the local and subregional levels. The policy of reforming the security sectors of Central African States requires their security and defence forces to commit to strict control of the weapons they own. Furthermore, under the aegis of the African Union Border Programme, a ECCAS border programme was adopted in May 2009. The third pillar of this programme seeks to ensure cross-border security and the fight against the trafficking of small arms and light weapons, which are a factor undermining neighbourly relations destabilizing economic development.

After a period of latency, during which the subregion was profoundly affected by its numerous conflicts, ECCAS, relaunched in 1999, now has as its primary mandate the task of re-establishing stability, peace and security. To that end, the goal of combating and eliminating the proliferation and uncontrolled circulation of small arms and light weapons is now ensconced on our agenda.

Looking to the future, the community's efforts in this area will be focused on finalizing the legal instrument and its adoption by member States; boosting the active participation of national commissions on small arms and light weapons; implementing the border programme, especially in the area of cross-border security; drawing up and implementing a police cooperation mechanism to address the issue of the six lawless zones; operationalizing the Gulf of Guinea securitization strategy in coordination with the Economic Community of West African States and, of course, with our international partners; implementing the policy of security sector reform in order to ensure that State armaments are traceable; providing support of all types to ensure the success of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration processes at rates of around 90 per cent by 2015; and strengthening civil society organizations with regard to information, awareness-raising and social networking. In order to achieve this ambitious project, our community is appealing to our international partners for their valuable assistance.

In conclusion, I should like to emphasize that ECCAS believes that combating the proliferation and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons is part and parcel of the comprehensive collective security strategy of the subregion. In that regard, we need to examine the chain linking the production and import of such weapons through to their use for criminal ends. Gaining the capacity to trace and control small arms and light weapons is thus an important part of our approach. Furthermore, a policy of crisis prevention, management and settlement, along with subregional and international police cooperation, will furnish the basic means of dealing with these problems. We therefore need to deploy all our human ingenuity by working to prevent problems early in the chain and through concrete action on the ground on the legal, political and technological levels.

If, however, we abandon the social and economic dimension, which fuels asymmetrical conflicts, all such efforts will be in vain. That is why our subregion believes that combating small arms and light weapons is one of the major pillars of the Millennium Development Goals.

The President (*spoke in French*): In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members, I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than five minutes, in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are requested to circulate their texts in writing and deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber. I now give the floor to the members of the Security Council.

Mr. Onemola (Nigeria): I, too, would like to welcome Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro and Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, as well as Mr. Louis Sylvain-Goma, Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States.

We appreciate your initiative, Mr. President, in organizing this thematic debate on the impact of illicit arms trafficking on peace and security in Central Africa. Your concept paper has proved valuable in facilitating discussion on this topical issue.

Illicit arms trafficking has a profound impact on peace and security in Africa in general, and in Central Africa in particular. It undermines good governance and disrupts trade, tourism and investment. It jeopardizes economic development and generally puts democracy and development at risk. Illicit small arms also heighten inter-State conflicts and put the nation-State system itself under attack. With armed guerrilla

groups proliferating and often dividing into warring factions, internal instabilities increasingly tend to evolve into larger regional wars. Cross-border support for insurgent movements is also on the rise. Large-scale wars are ongoing in some parts of Africa, resulting in millions of internally displaced persons. The role of natural resources in fuelling conflicts in the region can never be overemphasized. Fighters on all sides benefit from mineral wealth, while arms merchants are only too happy to keep the fighters supplied as long as they partake of that wealth.

I should like to suggest five areas where efforts should be directed in tackling illicit arms trafficking in Central Africa and other parts of the continent.

First, there is a need to strengthen national and subregional mechanisms to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The experience of the West African subregion provides an important lesson in this regard. To consolidate peacebuilding and reconciliation in the subregion, the heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) decided to transform the moratorium on the importation, exportation and manufacture of light weapons into a legally binding instrument, known as the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials. The Convention seeks to control, regulate and prohibit the transfer, manufacture and possession of small arms and light weapons. The subregion has been able to develop a plan of action, the ECOWAS Small Arms Control Programme, and also encourage the establishment of national focal points.

Secondly, in order to prevent weapons from ending up in the hands of those prohibited from receiving them, we believe that Governments must adhere to regional and international arms embargoes. They must start to sanction violators, as contraveners of arms embargoes have been able to act with impunity. The United Nations should redouble its efforts to closely monitor compliance, supervise enforcement and suggest persuasive measures to enhance compliance.

Thirdly, to end the impunity under which arms brokers operate, States should adopt an international arms trade treaty, which would provide common international standards regarding the practices of arms brokers. There is currently no uniform practice, with the result that arms brokers can change locations to avoid prosecution under one country's laws by doing business in and through other, less regulated countries. Such a treaty would ensure that middlemen cannot move weapons from conflict to areas free of conflict for fear of prosecution.

Furthermore, on the issue of standards, an international treaty that provides criteria on exports is needed in order to prevent arms from getting into the hands of abusers of human rights and international humanitarian law. International standards that determine eligibility requirements for arms exports would prevent arms from entering the illegal market and from falling into the hands of those likely to divert or use them for nefarious purposes.

Lastly, national Governments, especially those of arms-exporting States, must strengthen and use monitoring mechanisms in order to prevent legal sales from being diverted into the parallel market. End-use monitoring ensures that exported weapons are used properly and that exploiters follow all laws, policies, regulations and procedures, thus verifying that a foreign Government or the authorized foreign recipient of defence articles is using and controlling them in accordance with the terms and conditions of a transfer. Because many countries have non-existent or weak end-use monitoring provisions, international standards that require end-use monitoring are the most systematic and complete basis. Onboard pre-shipment and post-shipment points are required. In addition, a common international end-used certificate that cannot be easily forged or duplicated must be developed.

Finally, I would like to thank Gabon for the draft presidential statement, and affirm our support for its adoption at the end of this debate.

Mr. Mugoya (Uganda): I would like to start by welcoming the participation of Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro, and to thank her for her statement. I also thank Mr. Antonio Maria Costa and Mr. Louis Sylvain-Goma for their statements.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons has had a devastating impact on peace and security in Africa, and Uganda therefore thanks you, Mr. President, for organizing a debate on that important matter. We now know that the proliferation and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons are not the direct causes of conflict, but rather significant factors that fuel and sustain conflicts between and within States. Not only do they make

those conflicts more lethal, but they also make efforts and the peaceful resolution of conflicts more difficult. The greatest impact of all is on human security and the socio-economic development of States.

Africa, like other parts of the world, has continued to receive and recycle arsenals of arms to devastating effect. In some parts of Africa, such as Central Africa, the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa in particular, we have seen how the easy availability of small arms and light weapons has been a major destabilizing factor. Several of the conflicts in those areas are fought principally with small arms, whose low cost, ease of use and maintenance make them very popular. Such weapons also fuel crime and violence, displace civilians and undermine their rights. In the Central and East African regions, small arms and light weapons constitute a serious threat to peace, reconciliation, safety, security and sustainable development.

Small arms have also had an impact on low-intensity conflicts, such as those between communities in the border areas. In the pastoral communities bordering Kenya and the Sudan, as well as those bordering Kenya and Somalia, in the border areas of northern and eastern Uganda, and also in parts of the Kenyan border, cattle-rustling has had a long history due to aspects of the pastoral nomadic culture. The proliferation of small arms, particularly automatic and semi-automatic weapons, has all of a sudden made traditional cattle-raiding more deadly than ever before.

The illegal trade in natural resources in Central Africa has also heightened the illicit trade in small arms. Those new dynamics are a serious threat to peace, stability and the socio-economic development of the entire subregion. Illicit arms trafficking has also increased the incidences of armed violence, particularly in the urban centres in the region. It is now evident, too, that small arms and light weapons also play a role in facilitating and fuelling other illegal cross-border activities, such as drug trafficking and the trade in endangered species. Regional cooperation and coordination are therefore necessary so that programmes, activities or initiatives linked to that challenge are regional in scope and utilize regional institutions.

African Governments have initiated various mechanisms aimed at addressing the problem of proliferation and the abuse of such weapons. One such initiative is the Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa. The signatories to the Declaration include Kenya, Somalia, the Sudan, Ethiopia, Burundi, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Uganda, Tanzania and Djibouti. Those countries are tasked with ensuring that they take appropriate national measures aimed at addressing the problem of small arms and light weapons. The Declaration reflects the cross-border dynamic of conflict, instability and small arms proliferation and provides for an agenda for action and an implementation plan.

As part of its efforts to fight the illicit proliferation of arms and light weapons, Uganda has established a national focal point on small arms and light weapons under the Ministry of Internal Affairs to coordinate, combat and control the proliferation of firearms. A national firearm marking exercise is under way in the country, beginning with those firearms under the police and the army. Uganda also continues to implement collection and disposal measures and, since 2008, has disposed of more than 4,700 pieces of recovered illicit arms and light weapons. Currently, a countrywide firearms stocktaking exercise is being conducted within the police and armed forces to determine surplus stocks and serviceable and commissioned small arms and light weapons for final disposal.

Significant progress has been made in the Great Lakes region to strengthen controls on small arms and light weapons. It is encouraging to note that all countries have now established national focal points and are at different levels of implementing the action plan. To date, over 200,000 illicit small arms and light weapons have been destroyed in the subregion.

Now, the challenge is how Governments in the region can maintain the existing momentum. The efforts undertaken to improve cross-border cooperation and the enhancement of reinforcement capacity must be built on. The legal protocols on small arms control must be signed, ratified and implemented. Furthermore, the initiatives taken to improve weapons collection and stockpile management, ensure the effective demobilization and reintegration of former combatants, raise awareness in communities of the dangers of small arms, and, above all, reduce the *demand for weapons need to be intensified*.

One major challenge is how best to coordinate the various national initiatives among countries with different levels of resources, legal systems and institutional and technical capacity. Another major challenge to regional efforts has been the lack of resources.

Finally, in a region with porous borders and with people still living in conditions of poverty, efforts to reduce small arms and light weapons by States on their own are likely to have little or no impact. We wish to underscore once again the importance of a regional approach and focus in addressing this problem and the need for increased support of the international community in order to give greater assurance of human security and socio-economic development to States within Africa. Uganda therefore commends the countries in Central Africa for pursuing this regional approach.

Mr. Apakan (Turkey): The excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons pose a complex set of risks and threats to the security of States and their citizens. This is particularly the case in Central Africa. We therefore welcome the initiative taken by Gabonese presidency to have an open discussion on this issue today.

I also thank Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro and Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, as well as Mr. Louis Sylvain-Goma, for their comprehensive and insightful presentations.

It is estimated that 90 per cent of civilian casualties in modern conflicts around the world are caused by small arms. The Great Lakes region of Africa has been the most tragic example of that. In 1994, more than 800,000 people were murdered in Rwanda, mostly with small arms, including machetes. An estimated 300,000 civilians have also lost their lives the same way in Burundi. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the death toll used to average 2,600 per day. The instances of tribal and ethnic violence in Southern Sudan, which seem to be on the rise, and general lack of security in the triangle between Chad, the Central African Republic and Southern Sudan are also fuelled by the overabundance of small arms and light weapons.

The availability of small arms and light weapons also results in protracted armed conflicts, which are among the greatest obstacles to human development and a major cause of mass poverty, as such conflicts decimate economies and dislocate societies. For instance, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo the civil war has resulted in 4 million deaths that can be attributed to malnutrition and disease.

In addition, the proliferation of these weapons makes the peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts of the international community in various parts of Central Africa not only more difficult, but also highly dangerous. There is also a well documented relationship between the illicit trade in small arms and terrorism and other acts of organized crime.

It is of course the responsibility of every State to protect its citizens from the danger posed by the illicit trafficking and unauthorized use of arms and weapons. However, the transboundary nature and the magnitude of the threat warrants strong cooperation and coordination among States, as well as a multidimensional approach that deals with the problem at the local, national, regional and international levels simultaneously. In this context, we welcome regional initiatives that address this problem, such as the establishment of a subregional register of small arms in Central Africa.

Furthermore, not all States have the necessary capabilities to deal with this problem. Therefore, capacity-building emerges as an important component of the struggle in this field. In Central Africa in particular, we should expand foreign aid programmes that seek to eradicate the illicit arms trade in the subregion and do our utmost to help strengthen the capacities of States and indigenous organizations, such as the Economic Community of Central African States. In addition to bilateral aid programmes, United Nations offices also have an essential role to play in the coordination and implementation of relevant programmes, together with local authorities.

Turkey favours a comprehensive approach in dealing with this problem and thus remains committed to the effective implementation and further strengthening of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We also support the elaboration of more effective international norms and standards. Within this framework, we support the conclusion of an arms trade treaty, which should halt unregulated and uncontrolled trade in conventional arms worldwide and establish common standards for their global trade.

Moreover, reinforcing border and customs controls, as well as controls on brokering, licensed production and end use of small arms and light weapons, is indispensable for the prevention of illicit arms trade. Upholding existing arms embargoes and export bans, improving the security and management of stockpiles of arms and ammunition, and further promoting disarmament within the context of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes would also contribute to these efforts.

Finally, transparency and information-sharing would certainly help promote consistency in the implementation of agreed multilateral standards. We therefore attach importance to the fulfilment by United Nations Member States of their reporting requirements within the United Nations on their small arms activities.

In conclusion, illicit arms trafficking continues to pose a significant threat to international peace and security, which can be tackled only through our collective efforts. The Central African region, in particular, presents a prime example of this grim reality. I hope and believe that our meeting today and the draft presidential statement, which we fully support, will re-energize our endeavours in the right direction. For its part, Turkey is certainly committed to contributing to all relevant efforts.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): We applaud the initiative of Gabon to convene this debate on the issue of illicit arms trafficking in the Central African region. We welcome the presence of Deputy Secretary-General Migiro, Mr. Costa and Mr. Duarte. We also welcome the Secretary General of the Economic Community of Central African States and thank him for his statement.

The countries in the Central African region are not producers but importers of small arms and light weapons. Large numbers of small arms are imported illicitly and frequently traded for revenue from the natural resources of the region. Due to weak control systems, some of the illicit arms fall into the hands of anti-Government forces and non-State actors. According to the Small Arms Survey, only a small portion of small arms are in the custody of State security institutions. The abundant supply of small arms and light weapons aggravates not only conflicts, but also acts of violence and criminal activities.

The problems caused by small arms and light weapons in the Central African region are not limited to issues of social instability; they undermine human rights, protection of women and children and socio-economic development. They pose a central challenge to human security, as my colleague from Uganda noted, and may even become a threat to peace and security in Africa.

Japan therefore strongly supports various efforts being undertaken at the national, subregional, regional and global levels to address the problem of illicit small arms trafficking. At the national level, it is important to implement the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. We hope that an action-oriented outcome document will be adopted at the forthcoming Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, which is to take place in June this year.

We urge Member States to make efforts to submit national reports on the measures taken to implement the Programme of Action. It is absolutely essential for the States concerned to take responsibility for registering, controlling and managing small arms and light weapons and ammunition and to establish measurable goals as part of their national development plans.

At the regional and subregional levels, we encourage countries in the Central African region to expedite their efforts to establish a binding instrument on small arms and light weapons and ammunition, following the examples of other regions in Africa. It is particularly important to strengthen the management of national borders on the Gulf of Guinea as a common problem of the region. The Economic Community of Central African States may be a good forum for exchange of information and best practice with other regional organizations to extend and mobilize support for capacity-building.

At the global level, we need to the implement the 13 recommendations made by the Secretary-General in 2008 (see S/2008/258). They are all relevant to the Central African region. For instance, the Secretary-General recommended that plans for small arms and light weapons be integrated into peacebuilding and poverty reduction strategies, as a matter of priority. We also support Recommendation 9, on destruction of

surplus ammunition stockpiles, and we are actively supporting projects in that area.

Arms embargoes are necessary under certain conditions, and compliance is important to have the intended impact. Sanction monitoring groups, peacekeeping operation missions, relevant countries and regional organizations should cooperate closely. We look forward to the report by the Secretary-General to be issued this year.

In order to address the problem of small arms and light weapons in the Central African region, we need, first and foremost, priority actions on the part of the countries themselves. Such efforts should be matched by partnership and external support. There are various cooperative frameworks in the region. We wish for intensified efforts to strengthen collaboration and to adopt a comprehensive approach.

Japan places high priority on assistance to solve the problem of small arms and light weapons. In the last nine years we have provided $500 million in support of that. In the Central African region, where the problem of small arms is a major concern, we are engaged in projects in countries such as the Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to assist in the collection, destruction, stockpile management and control of small arms; in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; and in capacity-building.

Japan is unique in the world in having a very clear policy not to export arms, particularly to countries involved in conflict or likely to become involved. We are committed to play a leading role in the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. To that end, every year since 1995 — and, since 2005, joined by Colombia and South Africa as sponsors — Japan has submitted to the General Assembly a draft resolution on small arms and light weapons. We are pleased at the increasing support it has gained.

I wish to conclude by registering Japan's continued support for the global fight against illicit arms trafficking.

Mr. Araud (France) (*spoke in French*): I wish, of course, to thank the delegation of Gabon for having organized this discussion. A few days ago, when President Ali Bongo came to New York, he outlined his detailed plan for the prevention of conflicts. The problem of small arms and light weapons that we are addressing today is naturally closely linked to that.

The illicit manufacture and distribution of small arms and light weapons and of ammunition is one of the major threats to international peace and security. Millions of people have been their victims since 1945. Clearly, it is in this area that, if any progress is to be made, the issues of disarmament would be dealt with most fruitfully when it comes to security for all human beings.

Central Africa, sorely tried by conflicts for many years and victim of unstable land and sea borders, is particularly exposed. The example of the Lord's Resistance Army, composed of several hundred rebels, reveals the ability of armed groups to despoil entire regions and sow terror and desolation.

Apart from the impact on the physical safety of the people of Central Africa, small arms and light weapons have a long-term negative impact on the economic and social development of a region already beset by numerous development challenges. The trafficking in small arms and light weapons also contributes to prolonging conflicts. Illicit deliveries of arms in unstable areas are detrimental to efforts to achieve a negotiated settlement of conflicts and thus make peace difficult to achieve. They also impede the efforts of the Security Council and regional organizations in Central Africa.

The struggle against the illegal distribution of small arms and light weapons is an unequal combat. There is indeed a considerable disproportion between the several hundred thousand dollars that are sufficient to arm a rebel group and the human and financial costs for States and the international community of peacekeeping and disarmament operations or further initiatives for security sector reform. Those are the instruments available to us to end a crisis. Thus it is of capital importance that the problem of the distribution of small arms and light weapons be attacked at its root.

To fight the trafficking, it is necessary to mobilize States of origin and transit of these arms. That means enhanced surveillance of manufacturers and brokers and of air and maritime companies that are knowingly involved in the flow of illegal arms.

In order to prevent the circulation of such weapons from fuelling conflict, the Security Council has set up sanctions and embargo regimes, the

implementation of which is of capital importance. We urge all States to cooperate with the sanctions committees to ensure their follow-up.

The international community has also established legal tools to buttress the action of Central African States, and we must encourage their full implementation. I refer, inter alia, to the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and the international disarmament conventions. We also lend our full support to the initiative of the Economic Community of Central African States for the establishment of a register of small arms and light weapons on a regional basis.

The future arms trade treaty, which we very much hope for and for which my country is sparing no effort, will also be an essential tool in stopping the destabilizing flood of arms. France counts on the support of its partners in the upcoming deadlines and in view of the conference in 2012 to draw up the treaty.

Initiatives to prevent conflicts and to maintain and keep peace also contribute to reducing the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons. Disarmament, demobilization and resettlement programmes, for example, make it possible to reduce the number of arms in circulation. Supporting security sector reform helps strengthen the abilities of States to combat arms trafficking.

May I conclude by recalling that, in the fight against the dissemination of small arms and light weapons, my country has played its role. Since 2006 France has launched a series of regional initiatives in the framework of the Wassenaar Arrangement, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe and the European Union to prevent arms trafficking by private air companies. Regular reports submitted by European Union member States regarding implementation of the United Nations Programme on Small Arms provide an interesting experience with regard to actions that the Economic Community of Central African States intends to undertake at the institutional level within the framework of its subregional initiative. Finally, within the framework of European Union and Africa, we contribute, together with our European partners, to enhancing the capacities of African States to combat that trafficking by supporting the African training centre.

Mr. Salam (Lebanon) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to join my colleagues in welcoming Ms. Asha-Rose Migiro and to thank Mr. Antonio Maria Costa and Mr. Louis Sylvain-Goma for their valuable presentations. I would also like to express my gratitude and appreciation to the delegation of Gabon for organizing this important debate on the impact of illicit arms tracking on peace and security, a subject well within the competence of this Council, which is mandated to maintain international peace and security. It is natural that we focus on the region of Central Africa, one of the areas most affected by the scourge of small arms.

Small arms are the most commonly used weapons in civil conflict, in acts of terrorism and in ordinary and organized crimes, so much so that they have been described as weapons of mass destruction because of the huge number of casualties they cause, especially among women and children. Unlike for chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, however, there is so far no international non-proliferation regime for small and light weapons.

Statistics indicate that more than 100 States Members of the United Nations possess about 1,000 arms factories that produce about 8 million pieces of weapons annually. The number of small arms in circulation is estimated to be about 700 million, which translates to one weapon for each 10 individuals in the world.

These weapons are a universal threat to humanity. They cause suffering and destruction in many regions, especially in Central Africa, which has witnessed so many wars that they have been described as a "world war" because of the huge number of casualties they have caused directly or indirectly. That region and its society continue to suffer the consequences, be it to economic development or at the humanitarian level, which hinder progress and delay the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, as well as the Nairobi Declaration on the Problem of the Proliferation of Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa.

The problem of small arms cannot be handled merely through efforts to monitor them because it is an integral part of a wider context where conflicts

intersect with issues of security, violence, organized crime, human rights and development.

We are a few months away from the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in June. In this respect, Lebanon commends the efforts of the United Nations to contain the spread of small and light weapons and believes that they should be accompanied by efforts to address the root causes of crises and conflicts and to build effective institutions, as well as to eradicate hunger, poverty and illiteracy, which are principal causes of wars and conflicts in Africa.

Efforts to stop the spread of weapons should also be accompanied by encouragement of armed groups to abandon their weapons, to reintegrate their members, especially children, into society and to provide incentives and means to do so. In this regard, we commend the work of the many non-governmental organizations to achieve those goals.

Lebanon long suffered from the spread of these weapons and the ensuing destruction, especially in the years between 1975 and 1990. Therefore, we call for strengthening international cooperation to establish controls and ensure effective oversight and monitoring of the production of these weapons and their legitimate possession, storage, export and import.

Lebanon also calls for continued work to achieve common ground and an international consensus on a binding international instrument in this regard. Lebanon believes that this does not infringe the inherent right of States to individual or collective self-defence in the event of aggression against a Member of the United Nations, as stipulated in Article 51 of the Charter, or the right of peoples to resist occupation and to achieve self-determination.

Ms. DiCarlo (United States of America): I would like to express our appreciation to you, Mr. President, and to the delegation of Gabon for organizing today's debate on this important issue. I would also like to thank Deputy Secretary-General Migiro for her comments and presence today, and Mr. Costa and His Excellency Mr. Sylvain-Goma for their remarks.

Every year thousands of conventional arms worth millions of dollars flood illegally into every conflict zone in Africa, despite Security Council arms embargos. These ongoing weapons flows mean many thousands of deaths, millions of displaced persons and refugees, and billions of dollars spent on humanitarian assistance and emergency relief aid. The numbers are heartbreaking. United Nations-generated data suggests that conflicts fuelled by the illicit arms trade have left an estimated 14 million refugees homeless worldwide and 26 million people internally displaced.

The instability and insecurity born of these conflicts are massive obstacles to development. We all understand that Africa is harmed disproportionately by these trends. Of the 20 countries that experience the lowest levels of human development, all but one of them are in Africa and more than half of these countries have been shaken by significant levels of violence since 1990.

One stark example is the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where the transfer of arms into the eastern part of the country fuels a terrible conflict and threatens stability in the Great Lakes region. Indeed, a vicious cycle of underdevelopment and insecurity in Central Africa and elsewhere stokes conflict and illicit arms flows, and that in turn can thwart well-intentioned Governments and international actors working for progress.

To stem this tide of illicit arms, we must not only strictly observe and enforce United Nations arms sanctions regimes; we must also rigorously implement other international or regional instruments, as well as national export controls on arms flows to embargoed regions in Africa. Moreover, we should consider which controls are appropriate for arms transfers to conflict zones not subject to Security Council sanctions.

The United States is particularly proud of our extensive and rigorous system of export controls. We engage and assist other States, both bilaterally and through multilateral organizations and regimes, to raise their standards and to prohibit the transfer of capabilities to rogue States, terrorist groups and groups seeking to unsettle regions.

Conventional arms transfers are a crucial national security concern for the United States. We have always supported effective action based on the highest standards of responsibility to control the international transfer of arms. Indeed, we face questions of both law and responsibility here. Legal but reckless international transfers often fuel the illicit arms trade. For this

reason, the United States voted in the General Assembly last fall to support a strong and robust arms trade treaty.

We will actively support arms trade treaty negotiations so long as the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty takes its decisions by consensus. This is necessary to ensure that all countries can be held to standards that will improve the global standard, to ensure the widest possible support for the treaty and to avoid loopholes that may be exploited by those wishing to export arms irresponsibly.

My Government is also dedicated to combating the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons through support for destroying stockpiles of surplus, poorly secured or otherwise at-risk weapons and munitions. Since 2001, the United States has funded the destruction of more than 1.3 million small arms and light weapons, more than 50,000 tons of ordnance and nearly 32,000 man-portable air defence systems in over 38 countries around the world, including six of the 11 States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

The illicit arms trade hurts African countries disproportionately, but this issue should be a source of global concern. Illicit small arms can intensify and spread regional conflicts and the linkages among arms trafficking, narcotrafficking, terrorism and organized crime are very real. In the most basic sense, traffickers are traffickers. Narcotics traffickers, for instance, may very well use their established routes and networks to traffic in weapons or humans, should the situation present itself.

Given the stakes here, my Government is particularly pleased to be participating this June in the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We join Chairperson-designate Ambassador Macedo in noting that the Meeting will be crucial to helping lay the foundation for a successful Review Conference in 2012.

Mr. Heller (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are very grateful to you, Sir, and your delegation for having convened this timely open debate on illicit arms trafficking and its impact on peace and security in Central Africa. We welcome this opportunity for the Security Council to consider the pernicious effects of that criminal activity, which have been described in detail this morning by the Deputy Secretary-General, Mr. Costa and Mr. Sylvain-Goma.

My delegation will support the presidential statement to be adopted at the outcome of this meeting.

Illicit arms trafficking is undoubtedly among the most serious threats to peace and security in the current international context. On the one hand, it helps to strengthen organized crime and the illicit traffic in drugs, undermining political, social and economic stability in our countries. It also hampers peacebuilding in situations of institutional fragility. On the other hand, it is an obstacle to development and fosters the serious and systematic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law.

As we have stated in past debates of the Council on this issue, given the increasingly obvious link between drug trafficking and others manifestations of organized crime — such as illicit arms trafficking, money-laundering and terrorism — Governments and the international community must design strategies that enable them to address the specifics of any serious crime and to identify the common and convergent elements of such crimes in order to adopt a comprehensive approach. In this way, it will be possible to strengthen the rule of law and to clamp down on the culture of illegality and impunity throughout the world.

Of particular concern to Mexico, given the pernicious effects of arms trafficking, is the harm it causes to the civilian population. The price we pay for our inability to eradicate this scourge is measured in the human lives lost to it every day. It has been calculated that hundreds of thousands of people are killed every year by firearms, the majority of which are purchased on the black market. Thus, the effective implementation of resolution 1894 (2009) is of special importance.

It has been noted that Central Africa is among the regions that have suffered most from the destructive effects of the illicit traffic in weapons and ammunition and the irresponsible trade in weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons. The subregion has been shaken in recent years by protracted conflicts that have weakened the States of the region and, on occasion, impeded reconciliation and peacebuilding processes. Sadly, the subregion has seen the conflation of

practically all the pernicious effects of such activities, and weapons have circulated from conflict to conflict, regardless of borders or jurisdictions.

The complex nature of the problem highlights the importance of international cooperation to combat this global threat. Arms produced in one region of the world are sold illegally in another. It is of fundamental importance to recognize that the measures we adopt to counter the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and ammunition must be designed on the basis of shared responsibility involving States, international and regional bodies, and arms manufacturers, purchasers and users.

Over the past 10 years, the United Nations has devoted great effort and many resources to addressing the phenomenon under discussion. However, judging by the extreme availability of these weapons on illegal transnational black markets and in sorely affected areas such as Central Africa, we continue to face major challenges. Mexico believes that the United Nations must play a more active role in the debate on how to combat the scourge, not merely through its technical forums, but also by promoting high-level commitment to countering it.

In that regard, we now possess the mechanisms and instruments necessary to respond politically and legally to the challenges at hand. One such mechanism is the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action will be chaired by Mexico in June this year. It will provide a new opportunity to adopt specific measures to enable us to advance in preventing and combating illicit arms trafficking. We invite States and other actors in our endeavours in this area.

In the legal sphere, we have global and regional instruments, such as the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacture of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials. In a more general context, we must stress the importance of the Palermo Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition, to which there are now 79 States parties, as we have been informed today. We call on those States that have not yet done so to ratify or accede promptly to that important instrument.

We also welcome the progress made towards negotiating a possible arms trade treaty. We commend the efforts being made in Central Africa to establish a binding legal instrument for monitoring small arms and light weapons, ammunition and any material that could be used in their manufacture. We trust that these efforts will soon bear fruit. In that regard, we support the proposal to draft a subregional list of arms traffickers, which will make it possible in the future to initiate investigations and bring the perpetrators of such illegal activities to justice.

It is particularly important to consider the ways in which the Security Council can contribute, within its sphere of competencies, to the quest for better-designed and coordinated responses against this scourge. Thus, the Council, working closely with the General Assembly, the Peacebuilding Commission and other relevant United Nations bodies, must establish specific mandates for peace and peacebuilding missions. We therefore stress the importance of enhancing cooperation between the peace missions and integrated offices in the region — such as the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad, the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi and the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic — and neighbouring countries in undertaking joint work on implementing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes for ex-combatants of armed non-State groups and on security and justice sector reform processes.

Cooperation and information exchanges between the Security Council and regional and subregional bodies must also be strengthened. In that regard, it would be very useful to establish mechanisms for ongoing dialogue between the Council and the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

It is particularly important that the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States promote among their members the proper implementation of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. They should also put in place concrete measures to monitor borders or weapons-

crossing points and to investigate suspected embargo violations in States under sanctions.

The year 2010 offers an opportunity to make qualitative and quantitative progress in preventing and combating the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. All of us — countries, organizations and civil society — will have a chance to join efforts and take part in important multilateral events, including the Biennial Meeting on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which has already been mentioned, as well as the high-level meeting of the General Assembly on transnational organized crime. We cannot waste those opportunities.

Mr. Barbalić (Bosnia and Herzegovina): At the outset, I would like to express my deep appreciation to the Gabonese presidency for convening this debate. I would also like to welcome Deputy Secretary-General Asha-Rose Migiro, Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, Mr. Sergio de Queiroz Duarte and His Excellency Mr. Louis Sylvain-Goma.

My delegation associates itself with the statement to be made later on by the representative of the European Union.

Bosnia and Herzegovina believes that the proliferation of small arms and light weapons poses a real and tangible threat to the security and humanitarian situation and the social and economic development of the Central African region. We are also deeply concerned about the impact that the illicit trade in small arms has on human rights, as small arms are being used by armed groups against civilian populations, in particular in terrible practices of child recruitment and gender-based violence. Furthermore, the illicit trade in small arms also represents one of the major obstacles to United Nations international troops who are seeking to establish or maintain peace and security. It can seriously undermine peacebuilding efforts, poverty reduction strategies and human security frameworks.

We therefore believe that particular attention by the Security Council is essential in order to end those serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law and to provide an environment conducive to the effective implementation of the relevant United Nations peacekeeping and peacebuilding mandates.

Bosnia and Herzegovina underlines the importance of the full implementation by the States of the region of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was adopted on 20 July 2001 by the United Nations Conference. Furthermore, we believe that the adoption of the Code of Conduct for the Defence and Security Forces in Central Africa will be another practical step in confidence-building in the region. We therefore encourage Member States to act in that direction.

We would also like to call on Member States to make further efforts to elaborate a binding legal instrument and to develop modalities for its implementation, in order to ensure the monitoring of small arms and light weapons in the subregion.

Improving national transparency and oversight over light weapons through further harmonization and tightening of national legal frameworks regulating small arms and light weapons, including domestic laws on gun purchasing and ownership, require Governments to increase cooperation and information-sharing.

Adequate customs policies and strengthening national border controls to reduce illegal activities and to combat cross-border trafficking in small arms and light weapons is another area where regional cooperation is needed. The recent finalization and installation, in the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, of software for regulating small arms and light weapons brokering in Central Africa is a good example of a concrete contribution to advancing regional networking and the monitoring of small arms flows.

Bosnia and Herzegovina would also like to stress the importance of cooperation among Governments of the Central African region aimed at the establishment of a register within the Economic Community of Central African States. Such a regional inventory could also supplement global efforts to expand the United Nations Register on Conventional Arms to include all light weapons and small arms transfers.

In that context, we would like to stress the importance of providing the necessary financial and technical assistance for the implementation of all activities related to the issue of fighting illicit arms trafficking in the Central African region. Creating a favourable security climate is one of the crucial prerequisites for the countries of the region to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and ensure

stability, self-sustainability and social and economic development.

The preliminary draft of the legal instrument presented at the twenty-ninth Ministerial Meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, held in N'djamena, is a significant step. Once adopted, that legal instrument for the control of small arms and light weapons, ammunition and any equipment that could be used in their manufacture in Central Africa will address the crucial issues to which I have referred and provide a proper regional framework for tracking and securing the trade in small arms and light weapons in the region.

We very much hope that upcoming Ministerial Meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, to be held in Kinshasa from 26 to 30 April, will result in concrete actions aimed at strengthening cooperation at the regional and international levels, thereby contributing to arms control and disarmament in Central Africa and to the achievement of lasting peace and stability in that region.

Mr. Li Baodong (China) *(spoke in Chinese)*: I wish to thank the delegation of Gabon for its initiative to convene this open debate on the impact of illicit arms trafficking on peace and security in the Central African region. I would also like to thank Deputy Secretary-General Migiro for her statement, as well as Mr. Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and Mr. Sylvain-Goma, Secretary General of the Economic Community of Central African States, for their briefings.

As indicated in the concept paper prepared by the Mission of Gabon for this debate (S/2010/143, annex), the proliferation of and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons is a destabilizing element that affects the security and humanitarian situation and the economic and social development of the Central African region. We are pleased to note that, keenly aware of the adverse impact of illicit arms trafficking on regional stability, peace and development, countries of the Central African region are taking active steps to respond to that scourge and have achieved some results.

However, the negative impact of illicit arms trafficking continues to be pronounced in the region. It cannot be neglected in any way. In that connection, I would like to emphasize three points.

First, we support Central African States in continuing their active efforts to combat illicit trafficking in arms. On the basis of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and in line with its particular situation, each State may wish to draw up a complete set of rules and regulations on the production, possession, transfer and stockpile of small arms and ensure their effective enforcement. Countries of the region should also strengthen coordination and cooperation to effectively monitor the trade in small arms and light weapons and to combat illicit transactions. Regional and subregional organizations should play a greater role in coordination regional cooperation in that regard.

Secondly, we call for greater attention by the international community to the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons in the Central African region. Support for Central African countries in effectively combating the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons will have a beneficial effect on reducing conflict in that region. Of course, in the long run the fundamental way to eliminate conflict is to help Central African countries develop economically, eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development so as to root out the breeding ground for illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

Thirdly, China believes that the Security Council should actively and steadily continue its work in this regard. In recent years, the Security Council has held many open debates and adopted presidential statements on the question of small arms and light weapons. In its consideration of questions on the protection of civilians in armed conflict; women, peace and security; and children and armed conflict, the Council has also stressed the importance of small arms and light weapons. In our view, the Council should coordinate its work in this field with that of other relevant bodies.

The Council must also continue to strengthen its cooperation with regional and subregional organizations, such as the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States, in advancing peace processes in Central Africa with a view to creating an environment conducive to combating the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons.

China has always been opposed to the illicit manufacture of and traffic in small arms and light weapons. We sympathize with the people of Central

Africa, who have suffered immensely as a result of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We are willing to work together with the international community towards an early and appropriate solution of this problem. We also wish to thank the Gabonese delegation for having drafted the concept paper (S/2010/143) and support the adoption by the Council of the draft presidential statement on the impact of illicit arms trafficking on peace and security in the Central African region.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil): I congratulate Gabon on organizing this open debate. We also thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her remarks and her presence among us today. We appreciate the contributions made by Mr. Antonio Maria Costa and by Mr. Louis Sylvain-Goma.

The issue before the Council today is timely and appropriate. The consequences of arms trafficking and its threats to peace and security are troubling, as highlighted in the concept paper (S/2010/143) prepared for this debate. The international community should spare no effort in tackling such a challenge. As mentioned by Mr. Costa, the instruments to curtail the illicit arms trade are available. What is needed is their universalization and effective implementation.

Several important initiatives to address this problem have recently been adopted in different parts of Africa, including by national Governments, and in particular in Central Africa. In that region, the illegal trade of arms is a source of particular concern, given that some conflicts are still under way and given the severe impact on civilians, especially children and women.

However, the problem of arms trafficking is not exclusive to Central Africa. It concerns all of us. The review next June of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects will provide an excellent opportunity to engage all Member States in strengthening this key United Nations programme.

Brazil has strongly supported the Register of Conventional Arms since its creation by resolution 46/36 L of 1991, and has regularly provided information on the Register's seven categories.

Brazil also supports a legally binding instrument that would allow States to identify and trace illicit small arms and light weapons in a timely and reliable manner. We have already incorporated the recommendations of the International Tracing Instrument, adopted in the context of the United Nations Programme of Action, into our national legislation. We believe that the United Nations Programme of Action should be expanded to also cover ammunition and explosives.

An arms trade treaty would also go a long way towards regulating the trade and curbing the illicit traffic in arms. We are actively involved in the negotiations and urge all countries to fully engage in the preparations for the 2012 United Nations Conference on an Arms Trade Treaty. In our view, the arms trade treaty must include objective and non-discriminatory normative criteria, which should be taken into account when authorizing arms exports. These criteria should be based on a balance of responsibility among exporting, importing and transit countries. It should also provide an explicit prohibition on shipments of arms without the authorization of the competent organs of the Government of the country of transit or destination.

In addition to the multilateral response to the problem of arms trafficking, regions affected should also strive to create stronger regulatory frameworks. We are pleased with the initiative of the Central African region to negotiate a legally binding instrument to monitor the trade of small arms and light weapons. The Economic Community of Central African States can provide important support to this initiative and mobilize in so doing the experience of the African Union, the Economic Community of West African States and the Southern African Development Community. Such an initiative is a step in the right direction that should also be supported by the international community as a whole.

The fight against the scourge of illicit trafficking of arms will also require addressing the demand side of the problem in all its dimensions, changing the culture of violence, improving the humanitarian situation and promoting democracy and development in the continent are the surest way to successful and sustainable results.

Finally, let me express my delegation's support for the draft presidential statement to be adopted by the Council.

Mr. Shcherbak (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Deputy Secretary-General Migiro; Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; Mr. Sergio de Queiroz Duarte, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs; and Mr. Louis Sylvain-Goma for their substantive briefings.

The Russian Federation has consistently supported enhancing the role of the United Nations in coordinating the efforts of the international community to address the problems of the illicit traffic in arms, in particular small arms and light weapons. Today's meeting highlights the Security Council's interest in supporting the efforts of Member States to develop overall approaches to combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons throughout the world. Of course, priority in this context should be given to those regions where the problem of illicit arms trafficking is particular acute.

My delegation thanks the Gabonese delegation for organizing today's debate, since the illicit arms trade is a major destabilizing factor for Central Africa. First of all, this concerns those countries in the subregion where there are ongoing threats to peace and stability. That situation appears to be further deteriorating because of the actions of armed groups using well-oiled channels for obtaining small arms and light weapons. This was mentioned in the briefings of our colleagues.

Russia has always supported robust measures in any circumstance in which weapons are supplied to illegal armed groups. The Security Council's arms embargos are, of course, a major tool in eradicating illegal supplies of weapons to conflict zones. To ensure the full effectiveness of such prohibitions, they must be steadfastly respected by all States. We express our support for individual and collective measures by countries of the region to combat the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

The Russian Federation has always stressed the importance of mobilizing activities in this area, not only at the international level, but also nationally and regionally.

In that regard, we welcome the implementation of the Sao Tome Initiative by the Central African States and the consideration, in the context of the ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa of the draft legally binding instrument on the control of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa, their ammunitions and all equipments that might be used in their manufacture. We believe that the adoption of that instrument would enable the countries of the subregion to further strengthen their efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Efforts to address the issue of attempts to illegally supply of small arms and light weapons to conflict zones, in particular in Africa, and to eradicate the threat that such supplies pose to the stability of post-conflict countries are seriously hindered by the absence of a unified approach by the international community to counteract the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We believe that all efforts to address that scourge should be based on the relevant United Nations Programme of Action. We are convinced that it continues to be effective, and we should realize its full potential.

In that context, we look forward to the successful holding of the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action in June. We also consider it important for all States, in particular those of Central Africa, to implement the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

The Russian delegation appeals to the countries of Central Africa region to continue to pay close attention to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Clearly, if that problem is not resolved, it will be impossible to achieve the full settlement of ongoing conflicts or to guarantee security, stability and sustainable development.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the Russian Federation supports the draft presidential statement on this issue, prepared by the delegation of Gabon.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (Austria): Let me join others in thanking you, Mr. President, and the Gabonese presidency of the Council for organizing this very important debate on a key topic that has particular relevance for the region of Central Africa. We are grateful for the interest shown in this matter by the Deputy Secretary-General. We appreciate the presence of the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs. We listened with great interest to what the Secretary General of the Economic Community of Central African States had to say.

However, let me also say a special word of thanks to Executive Director Costa. Since we joined the Council a year ago, we have had many occasions to listen to his presentations. For obvious reasons, we know his work well and I must say that what he told us today was once again a model of precision, clarity and frankness.

We align ourselves fully with the statement to be made by the representative of the European Union, but let me also add the following points.

Small arms and light weapons are commonly termed the real weapons of mass destruction, as they are responsible for an exceedingly high toll of human lives on a regular basis. According to the statistics that we have seen, they cause the deaths of more than 500,000 people annually — approximately 1,400 people per day. The vast majority of the victims are civilians.

As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon stated on an earlier occasion, small arms facilitate a vast spectrum of human rights violations, such as rape and other forms of sexual violence, torture and the forced recruitment of children by armed groups or forces. In resolution 1894 (2009) on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, the Council noted that the excessive accumulation and destabilizing effect of small arms and light weapons pose a considerable impediment to the provision of humanitarian assistance and have the potential to exacerbate and prolong conflicts, endanger civilians, and undermine security and the confidence required for a return to peace and stability.

Today's draft presidential statement also underlines the fact that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons fuels armed conflict and thereby has various harmful effects on the civilian population, including gender-based violence and the recruitment of child soldiers. As others have already said today, it is very clear that such challenges require a firm response at the national, regional and global levels.

For that very reason, we see the importance of the initiative of the Economic Community of Central African States to draw up a legally binding instrument on the control of small arms and light weapons, their ammunitions and all equipments that might be used in their manufacture. Mr. Sylvain-Goma gave us a detailed presentation on the various activities of the Community, but we very much believe that this core initiative deserves support. For that reason, we have also decided to support it financially, from an Austrian point of view. We look forward to the adoption of the legally binding instrument.

Furthermore, we support other important regional initiatives by African States aimed at fighting illicit arms brokering, such as the establishment of a register of arms dealers. We welcome the draft presidential statement to be adopted today and the fact that it acknowledges those two important Central African initiatives.

In that context, let me comment on the invaluable support provided by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, in particular the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, in promoting and implementing those and other initiatives. The efforts of the Regional Centre aimed at preventing the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons deserve our full support.

The illicit flow of such weapons is a problem that goes beyond Central Africa and affects the whole continent. In 2007, my country co-organized an international conference in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on peace and security in West Africa. The outcome document of the conference also envisioned the possibility of a pan-African convention on the control of small arms and light weapons — a vision that we continue to support wholeheartedly.

We are pleased that the European Union Africa Strategy comprises a segment on small arms and light weapons and that the first pan-African project in the fight against those weapons has recently been launched, with the support of the African Union. It is clear that such challenges as the fight against the illicit trafficking of those weapons require a firm internationally coordinated response. We need the cooperation of States and international and non-governmental organizations, which is also acknowledged in the draft presidential statement.

At the global level, Austria strongly supports the ongoing process towards an arms trade treaty, a legally binding international agreement establishing a set of basic rules to regulate the international transfer of conventional arms, including small arms and light weapons. Pending the adoption of such a global legal instrument, the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

remains the only global forum and global instrument to prevent the illicit trade in such weapons.

Convinced of the need for African States to be actively involved and to participate in the upcoming Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action, which, as others have already mentioned, will take place in New York in June under the chairmanship of Mexico, we have teamed up with the United Nations Development Programme to provide support for African delegations to participate in that Meeting.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons is closely interrelated with transnational organized crimes, such as the illicit trafficking of drugs or the illicit exploration of natural resources. This debate, therefore, is in line with the Council's efforts to tackle transnational threats to peace and security in a comprehensive manner. In that regard, we welcome the Council's call on Member States to accede to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols, and we commend the assistance of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in implementing those legal instruments.

In conclusion, Austria remains committed to assisting African States, in particular those of Central Africa, in building the capacities to counter and, eventually, to prevent the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and the respective ammunition. We call on all Member States to support their efforts in that regard.

Sir Mark Lyall Grant (United Kingdom): I thank you, Mr. President, for initiating today's debate. This is an issue of serious concern to the United Kingdom. Like others, I should like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her introduction today and Mr. Costa and Mr. Sylvain-Goma for their contributions, and also to welcome the attendance of High Representative Duarte at today's debate.

The draft presidential statement before us addresses three key issues: action by the Central African subregion, the arms trade itself, and action by the international community in response. I should like to address these three issues.

First, I shall address subregional action. The United Kingdom believes that information-sharing and transparency help to tackle this illicit trade. Transparent systems are less vulnerable to manipulation by groups that view rigorous export controls as an obstacle to their self-serving goals. Closing gaps and addressing weaknesses in licensing procedures, end-use monitoring practices and other controls are essential measures for preventing diversion. It is easier to spot and correct diversions in transparent systems than in systems that are more opaque.

The establishment of a subregional register of small arms by the Central African States should be an effective step in our overall efforts to combat this illicit trade and should promote regional confidence-building, stability and security.

Secondly, with regard to the arms trade more generally, we acknowledge the right of States to legally trade in conventional arms for self-defence. However, we must ensure that robust transparency and control measures are in place to avoid arms being diverted to those who could use them to commit human rights violations and undermine peace and security.

To this end, the United Kingdom has played a leading role in developing a legally binding arms trade treaty that would set standards for the arms trade, ensuring respect for human rights and international humanitarian law while respecting a State's inherent right to self-defence.

Furthermore, arms embargoes imposed by this Council in the Central African region require the active cooperation of the Central African countries themselves to ensure their effective implementation. If those embargoes are to be effective in their purpose and deliver the improvements to the political and security environments that they have been introduced to achieve, any possible violations must be promptly reported.

Thirdly, the United Nations has a role. United Nations missions in the subregion are involved in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration work. Good practice in this area includes measures to prevent the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and to manage effectively the legitimate stockpiles of weapons held by States.

The United Kingdom Government is playing its part. We are providing funding to non-governmental organizations that are developing initiatives and mechanisms for enhancing controls and regulations on small arms and light weapons and arms transfers,

reducing conflict and promoting more effective and accountable security provision. We are also supporting non-governmental organizations that provide independent policy research and analysis on small arms and armed violence issues, for example in Burundi.

Through our support to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Crisis Prevention and Recovery Thematic Trust Fund, the United Kingdom has assisted efforts to control and curtail the supply of arms to conflict zones and fragile settings through civilian arms collection, surplus destruction and stockpile management, as well as enhancements to transfer and export controls. We have also supported UNDP's armed violence reduction work, which aims to inhibit the demand for arms and target the root causes of armed violence and community insecurity, for example by supporting armed violence prevention and community security programmes.

Every day, people are affected by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunitions. In the hands of criminal gangs or armed groups, as the Austrian Ambassador has just said, hundreds of thousands of people worldwide are injured and killed by them every year. Such violence destroys livelihoods, displaces entire communities and hampers social and economic development. The impact on peace, reconstruction, stability, security, human rights and sustainable development has been especially damaging in Central Africa. The draft presidential statement before us points the way for addressing this scourge and we strongly support the measures it contains.

The President (*spoke in French*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as representative of Gabon.

At the outset, I should like to express my gratitude to the Deputy Secretary-General, who wished to participate in this debate, and to thank her for her important statement, which recalled the ongoing efforts of the United Nations to better organize the fight against illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons.

I also welcome the presence of Mr. Louis Sylvain Goma, Secretary General of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), and thank him for his rich contribution to this debate, in which, as members will have noted, he underscored the scale of this problem in Central Africa, the susceptibility of the subregion owing to its numerous areas of lawlessness, as well as the cooperation initiatives being carried out by ECCAS member States with a view to better combating trafficking.

We further welcome the participation in this debate of representatives of other regional organizations, in particular the African Union and the European Union. Finally, I should like to thank various speakers for the kind words they expressed to the Gabonese delegation, and above all for their positive assessment of the topic and timeliness of this debate.

It is evident from all the statements we have heard that, from a broad perspective, the issue of illicit arms trafficking is new neither for the Security Council, nor for the United Nations in general. It will be recalled that the Council first considered this matter at a ministerial meeting held on 24 September 1999 at which it issued a presidential statement (S/PRST/1999/28). In 2001, the Council once again considered this topic, to assess its role in the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects of July 2001. That meeting also led to a presidential statement (S/PRST/2001/21). The representative of China correctly referred in his remarks to other meetings of the Council on this topic and others related to it. Since 2002, the Secretary-General has published no less than five reports on this matter. All these efforts of the Council and the Secretary-General were able to identify the measures to be taken at the international level to tackle the challenge of illicit arms trafficking.

In taking the initiative to organize this debate during our presidency, Gabon seeks to further engage the Security Council to take account of changes relating to illicit arms trafficking in the subregion and to consider innovative measures aimed at better combating and eliminating this scourge. Our hope is to see this debate trigger consideration in greater depth of ways to strengthen the implementation of the measures contained in the July 2001 Programme of Action and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, as well as the various relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

As several speakers have stressed, the proliferation of weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons, has become one of the main concerns of

the international community because of the multiple negative consequences arising from this phenomenon. Indeed, the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is a factor that destabilizes States in terms of security, humanitarian considerations and development. These weapons are also used as means for violating human rights, including in times of peace.

Because of the various crises and conflicts that regularly the world exacerbated by the illicit flow of small arms and light weapons, the United Nations organized, in New York in July 2001, the first Conference devoted to this question, which led to the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

The Secretary General of the Economic Community of Central African States, Mr. Louis Sylvain-Goma, has rightly pointed out that Central Africa, which is one of the regions most affected by this phenomenon, has adopted measures to implement that programme. The countries of Central Africa also decided in May 2007 in Sao Tome and Principe to establish a legally binding instrument to control small arms and light weapons, their ammunitions and all components that might be used in their manufacture.

The next ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, which will take place in April in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, will be devoted to consideration of that draft. With other countries of the subregion, Gabon is committed to enhancing national and subregional measures to combat the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and to strengthening confidence-building measures adopted within the context of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. Similarly, we are determined to enhance the transparency in weapons, including through the establishment of a subregional register of national stockpiles of small arms and light weapons.

Globally, Gabon is in favour of the drafting and adoption of an arms trade treaty establishing common standards in this area. Such a treaty would enhance existing international instruments against the illicit arms traffic. The draft presidential statement that has been negotiated, and which my delegation is submitting to the Council today for adoption, reflects our commitment to combating the illicit arms traffic.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I call on Mr. Tete António, Permanent Observer of the African Union.

Mr. António (*spoke in French*): I would like to begin by commending the Gabonese presidency of the Security Council and to express, Sir, through you, our deep gratitude to the Republic of Gabon for its initiative to organize a debate on a subject of the utmost importance for the African continent. This initiative is part and parcel of the valuable service that your country has always rendered to Africa whenever our continent has been threatened or the peace of an African country jeopardized. The most recent visit to New York of President Ali Bongo Ondimba, who defended the highest causes of our continent and of peace in the world, only supports my words.

I would like to thank the Deputy Secretary-General for her briefing this morning, Mr. Costa for his presence, and Mr. Duarte, who plays an extremely important role in disarmament in Central Africa.

We all agree on the paradox that the African continent produces few weapons but is beset by the scourge of the illicit arms traffic, the consequences of which range from massive violations of human rights and international humanitarian law due to violence to the phenomenon of child soldiers and the traffic in small arms and light weapons, as well as to an almost endless list of such phenomena as terrorist networks and piracy in certain areas of the continent. Today, we heard from the Secretary General of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) of a new phenomenon — the role played by fundamentalist religious circles in the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons in Central Africa.

Aware of all these threats, African countries have taken national, subregional and continental measures. What has the African Union done? As certain previous speakers have emphasized, the first African Union conference on this issue — the Ministerial Conference on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons in Africa, held in Bamako, Mali, in 2000 — adopted the African Common Position on small arms and light weapons. The Ministerial Conference recognized that the

proliferation of small arms and light weapons undermines good governance and economic development in Africa.

The Bamako Conference recommended that certain measures be taken, inter alia, the development and implementation of national programmes for responsible management of light weapons, the voluntary surrender of small arms and light weapons, the reintegration of demobilized people, the harmonization of legislation and the reinforcement of subregional cooperation. The Conference also launched an appeal for an international partnership to combat the proliferation and illegal traffic in small arms and light weapons. We are delighted that certain delegations, such as that of Austria, have emphasized the cooperation that the African Union has developed with many partners, including the European Union and the United Nations.

On the basis of the outcome of the Bamako Conference, the African Union has adopted other measures to curb illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. At the seventy-fourth session of the Executive Board, held in Lusaka in 2001 in advance of the adoption of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, measures were taken enabling Africa's active participation in the United Nation Conference held in 2001, at which the continent defended a long-term international partnership. Furthermore, in Windhoek, Namibia, the African Union adopted the Common African Position for the United Nations Conference of 2005. The Windhoek conference requested the African Union Commission to develop a binding legal instrument to prevent, combat and eradicate illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. In 2006, the Executive Council of the African Union adopted a global political framework on post-conflict reconstruction and development, identifying mines and light weapons as challenges to post-conflict reconstruction peace-building. The African Union continues its endeavours to meet its obligations in developing peacebuilding, to which the Secretary General of ECCAS referred today.

It is clear that the adoption of good strategies and action plans are not the main point. The main point is their implementation. As far as Central Africa is concerned, as we heard the Secretary General of ECCAS say today, the region has adopted mechanisms that should be supported, such as the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa. The capacities of ECCAS itself should be strengthened, as should the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region. All these strategies must continue to be developed. It is also important for the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security in Central Africa to enjoy the means necessary to continue to play an active role in tune with the needs of the region. We welcome the opening of a United Nations bureau in Central Africa, trusting that its mission will essentially to buttress subregional capacities.

To conclude, we believe that the issue of the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons must be holistically analyzed in Central Africa. We think of the illicit exploitation of natural resources. For several years in that region, we have seen the illegal exploitation of natural resources. It is therefore high time that the phenomenon of the illicit exploitation of natural resources be fought with the same vigour with which we combat the illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons.

The African Union will spare no effort to implement all measures to make peace a daily reality for all the sons and daughters of Africa, a dream that is shared by countless men and women around the world and that we must hand down to future generations. We believe that the presidential statement to be adopted today will contribute to that goal.

The President (*spoke in French*): I thank Mr. Antonio for his statement. I now give the floor to the representative of Botswana.

Mr. Ntwaagae (Botswana): My delegation joins other delegations in congratulating you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for the month of March 2010. Botswana attaches great importance to combating the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, and in this connection we welcome your initiative, Sir, to hold this open debate on the impact of illicit arms trafficking on peace and security in the Central African region. Let me also commend you for inviting representatives of regional organizations, all of whom, we believe, are crucial stakeholders in the subject matter of today's debate.

The illicit trade and trafficking in small arms and light weapons is a major threat to peace and security in Africa. The impact of illicit arms trafficking on peace and security in the Central African region is

particularly severe. Besides peace and security, other specific issues that arise from the problem of illicit arms trafficking are cross-border crimes, armed violence, and harassment of travellers, tourists and investors, both local and foreign.

My delegation aligns itself with the draft presidential statement on this subject, and we fully support its adoption later today and its recommendations. We also associate ourselves with the statement just delivered by the Permanent Observer of the African Union on this subject.

We agree that peace, safety and stability are essential preconditions for the achievement of sustainable development. This means that addressing the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, which fuels armed violence and instability, will go a long way in promoting an environment conducive to development.

Clearly, the presence of arms that are unaccounted for not only contributes to heightened crime levels, but also provides an opportunity to undermine efforts to expand infrastructure and to deliver services throughout the length and breadth of national territory. It is therefore important that the international community step up efforts to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, a challenge that has the potential to undermine a country's development prospects and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by the target date of 2015. Furthermore, arms that are unaccounted for impede the process of regional and Africa-wide economic integration and the people-to-people interaction that we all aspire to in that part of the world.

Botswana views the curbing of arms trafficking as a practical step towards attaining international peace and security, including in the Central African region. Such efforts deserve the full support of the international community, including through extending financial and other resources to countries in the region and strengthening the capacity of the subregional economic body, the Economic Community of Central African States, in the coordination of agreed measures.

Efforts by the subregion to implement confidence-building measures and establish mechanisms for the promotion of peace and security deserve the support of the international community. Botswana notes with appreciation the important role of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa with regard to supporting the measure that I have just mentioned. We also welcome the proposed legally binding instrument on monitoring small arms and light weapons, ammunition and manufacturing equipment, which will be on the agenda of the thirtieth ministerial meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee, which is to be held in Kinshasa from 26 to 30 April 2010. Botswana urges the international community to lend its full support to this process and to also support the implementation of such a legal instrument once it is in place.

Botswana is committed to the full implementation of measures mandated by regional and international legal instruments, in particular the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, and — in my subregion — the Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials in the Southern African Development Community Region.

We are pleased, Sir, that you have convened this open debate at a time when we are preparing for the fourth Biennial Meeting of States on Small Arms, to be held from 14 to 18 June 2010. This debate should serve to enrich our understanding of the issues in Central Africa in particular, which is one of the hardest-hit regions as far as the problem of small arms and light weapons trafficking is concerned, so that we will be better prepared to make meaningful contributions to the deliberations of that Meeting.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to reiterate Botswana's commitment to the realization of peace and security in Africa as a prerequisite to development, dignified human existence, effective governance and the pursuit of prosperity. We cannot overemphasize the need for cooperation at the regional, bilateral and international levels in order to facilitate the successful implementation of our commitments under the various agreements. Botswana also supports the use of innovative measures and initiatives to deal with specific aspects of arms trafficking and the mitigation of its impact.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Chad.

Mr. Allam-mi (Chad) (*spoke in French*): I would first of all like to greet all the eminent speakers who made statements before me. I would also like to congratulate my brother from Central Africa, Ambassador Emanuel Issoze-Ngondet of the Gabonese Republic. He has not only shown competence and efficiency in presiding over the Council and thus brought honour to the States of the subregion, but also demonstrated his concern for the fate of our entire subregion by including on the Council's programme of work the serious issue of the impact of arms trafficking on peace and security in Central Africa. I would also like to thank, of course, Council members for having agreed to this proposal.

Illicit arms trafficking in our Central African subregion poses a permanent threat to the consolidation of the rule of law, democracy and economic and social development. Our capacity to ensure good governance, which is imperative, and a secure environment conducive to lasting economic and social development has been sorely tried by the illicit circulation in the subregion of arms of all calibre. This enriches traffickers who are frequently invisible and users of all sorts, from petty criminals to adventurers posing as revolutionaries and defenders of human rights to seize power, as well as road blockers and other highway bandits.

Obviously, peaceful citizens — men, women and children — are their primary victims. Our States, fragile and with limited human and other resources, find it difficult to combat these outlaws and to maintain order and security in order to meet our peoples' legitimate aspirations to more peace and security. The first thing that the international community must do is to help us by bolstering our material and human resources to combat illicit arms trafficking and its impact on peace and security in our subregion. We need help in revising and harmonizing our national legislation to international provisions, in establishing an arms database and checklist, and in national capacity-building to manage stockpiles and combat cross-border crime.

Chad welcomes the quality of the work that has been done in promoting peace and implementing our security policies under the auspices of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, the twenty-ninth ministerial meeting of which was held in N'djamena. I wish to emphasize that we have placed on the agenda of our forthcoming meeting in Kinshasa consideration of preliminary drafts of a legal instrument for the monitoring in Central Africa of small arms and light weapons, ammunition and any material used in their manufacture, and of an implementation plan for that instrument.

I would also emphasize that, in the context of subregional cooperation, in particular within the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), we have established instruments for crisis prevention and management to that have proved to be very effective in helping us to implement our peace and security policies. The statement of the Secretary-General on that issue was very edifying.

The security situation in the region is well known. Successive civil wars, having undermined our young States and our security services responsible for enforcing regulations on the monitoring and movement of arms, have fuelled crime and the activities of arms traffickers in our subregion. Porous borders are difficult to monitor and allow illicit arms traffickers and users to move easily from one country to another. The lack of security arising from that situation is a major challenge that each of our States must meet, but one that we can also fight together with joint patrols involving two or several countries that share the same border. Such an effort must be complemented by relevant intelligence allowing us to identify and punish traffickers.

When States are responsible for illicit trafficking, firm and effective international sanctions are imperative. Moreover, if we are to obtain their cooperation, which is also necessary to that effort, our people must be made aware of the gravity of the situation so that we can collect illegally held arms.

With respect to Chad, the circulation of light weapons can be explained with reference to the repeated wars and disturbances that have shaken our country since its independence. Armed groups, supported from outside the country, have introduced weapons into the various regions and provided them to road blockers, poachers and other traffickers in the Sahel and the Sudanese border. In addressing this situation, and despite the vast area involved, the Government has carried out regular operations to recover those weapons, which are a source of insecurity and violence. In December 2008, we set up a

national disarmament commission that has recovered more than 10,000 weapons of various calibres.

We look to the future with optimism as political life of our country has considerably improved. We have normalized our relations with the Sudan, opening the way to improved bilateral cooperation to enhance security on our common borders. We also rely on the support of the international community in carrying out our disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme so that ex-combatants from armed groups, particularly child soldiers, may legally enter public and private life. In that regard, we wish especially to thank the international community for having decided, at a time when we particularly needed it, to deploy the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad to make the eastern region of our country more secure, as far as possible, in particular by strengthening our capacities through the deployment of the Detachement intégré de sécurité. We trust that we shall be able to go it alone in the future, but we rely on other sources of support from the international community to complement our human and other resources.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Morocco.

Mr. Bouchaara (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset, on behalf of the Kingdom of Morocco, to congratulate you warmly, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. You represent Gabon, a friendly and brotherly country with which Morocco has historic warm, deep-rooted and special relations at all levels. I also take this opportunity to congratulate you on your decision to have the Council debate the important subject of the impact of small arms and light weapons on security and stability in Central Africa, a region close to our hearts.

I also thank Ms. Megiro, Mr. Costa, Mr. Duarte and Mr. Sylvain-Goma for their important contributions.

The control of illicit arms trafficking is essential to maintaining international peace and security. The international community must therefore strive to reinforce the existing international regime on combating the proliferation and illicit trafficking of small arms. This legal framework but must be complemented by comprehensive and binding international instruments. In that context, my country believes that all regional and subregional policies to address this problem would benefit from having a robust international legal system to tackle the illegal trade in these destructive weapons and to mark them in order to ensure that the can be rapidly traced.

Of course, the establishment of such a legal regime took a major step forward in 2001 with the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and in 2005 with the adoption of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. The regime should now be enlarged and consolidated to encompass illegal brokerage and to limit effectively and efficiently the scale of the uncontrolled circulation of those arms and its impact on international and regional peace and security. Until that regime is strengthened, Morocco believes that the implementation of those instruments makes a crucial contribution to limiting the disastrous effects of the illicit traffic in small arms. Those efforts at the international level will no doubt have a positive impact on Africa overall, and on Central Africa in particular.

In that connection, despite its failure in 2006, the Review Conference served to emphasize the broad prevailing consensus on the importance and relevance of the Programme of Action, which has made it an essential point of reference for international action to regulate the circulation of light weapons. Moreover, based on that result, in 2008 the Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action was able to adopt a regional approach to the implementation of the Programme. The Conference also called for the convening of regional meetings to harmonize efforts to implement the Programme of Action, and acknowledged the importance of international cooperation and assistance for the effective implementation of that instrument. In that context, the June 2010 Biennial Meeting will be an important international gathering to consider the best ways to implement the Programme of Action.

The efforts of the countries of Central Africa should be recognized and supported. In that spirit, my country encourages the initiatives undertaken by the countries of the Central Africa to strengthen confidence-building measures and to develop a binding legal instrument and modalities for the control of these weapons at the subregional level, with the support of

the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

Moreover, the development in the context of the Economic Community of Central African States of an instrument similar to the Bamako, Nairobi and Economic Community of West African States conventions, declarations and protocols — aimed at setting up a legal and institutional framework to call upon the member States of the Central African subregion to harmonize their positions and pool their efforts to combat the traffic in light weapons — could be a useful avenue to pursue.

To that end, of course, it is necessary to strengthen the capacity of that subregional body to clearly identify the specific problems and needs of each member country. Moreover, it is necessary for the international community to provide meaningful support, including heightened assistance and cooperation, to the countries of the region that request it in order to allow them to confront the challenges posed by the illicit traffic in light weapons.

It was altogether logical for Morocco to join, from the outset, in the efforts of various countries that led to the adoption, in June 2006, of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. That initiative, whose relevance has been recognized by a growing number of countries, was perfectly in line with the efforts of the United Nations. In that regard, strengthening the international partnership to allow donor countries, development agencies and disarmament bodies to integrate the issue of armed violence into their programmes of action would make it possible to orient existing strategies towards an innovative and harmonized approach that is tailored to each situation and geared around targeted goals to address and prevent the underlying causes of armed conflict and to mobilize and channel the necessary development resources.

Addressing the problem of light weapons, whose worrying impact also touches upon the serious global threats posed by terrorism and transnational organized crime, is of crucial importance today and underscores the urgent need for the international community to provide a global response. There is no doubt that this type of debate in the Council contributes to strengthening the efforts of the international community in this area. We commend Gabon for its initiative to organize it.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Costa Rica.

Mr. Urbina (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by thanking your delegation, Mr. President, for organizing this debate. I would also like to express my gratitude for the statements by Deputy Secretary-General Migiro; Mr. Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; and Mr. Sylvain-Goma, Secretary General of the Economic Community of Central African States. I would also like to welcome the presence of Ambassador Duarte, High Representative of the Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.

Costa Rica welcomes your delegation's initiative, Mr. President, to once again put the issue of illicit arms trafficking before the Security Council. We have reiterated before that the proliferation and illicit traffic in small arms has a negative impact on the security of people, exacerbates tensions, sparks conflicts, and often poses a genuine threat to international peace and security. One need not refer to the great number of injuries and deaths they produce, or to the costs required to address them, to conclude that the proliferation of and illicit traffic in small arms are problems that require the urgent and careful attention of the international community.

Costa Rica believes that the Organization has an inescapable duty to produce instruments to limit on the manufacture and trade in weapons. However, until it does, the issue of illicit arms trafficking should be the focus of the Council's attention, in particular with regard to specific situations such as those in Central Africa, a region that is acutely suffering from the damaging effects of the proliferation of small arms.

My delegation respectfully urges the members of the Council to support the initiative of the countries of that region to establish a legally binding instrument to monitor small arms and light weapons and their ammunitions at the subregional level. We also urge the ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa to draft instruments that ensure transparency in the manufacture, trade and traffic in weapons, contribute to the implementation of national weapons-marking programmes, and launch a monitoring and registration mechanism for existing weapons at the subregional level.

We believe it important to offer international support for any initiative that promotes an exchange of best practices among the countries of the region and ensures the full implementation of appropriate national legislation on these issues. In that connection, it is important to recall that the countries of the region must abide by their obligations under Council resolutions on arms embargoes. Greater interaction with the Council's sanctions committees and their experts' groups would contribute to the implementation of embargos and make it possible to meet the challenges posed by their implementation.

Costa Rica believes it necessary for the countries of the region to contribute actively to the effectiveness of the measures adopted by the Security Council. They should provide the required information on measures adopted to implement arms embargoes. In that regard, we find it especially worrisome that there is a lack of reports on the implementation of the arms embargo against the Democratic Republic of the Congo — information that is required under resolutions 1857 (2008) and 1896 (2009).

We also wish to reiterate the crucial responsibility of arms manufacturers to abide by weapons notification and transfer requirements imposed by the Security Council. They should also take every possible step to ensure that such weapons do not fall into the hands of criminals or are used for illegal purposes.

Costa Rica urges the international community to focus anew on the issue of the proliferation of small arms in Central Africa, by means of resources and equipment and programmes for capacity-building and institutional support. We believe that the donors who support security sector reform programmes and training for security forces should incorporate the effective management of stockpiles of arms and weapons into their programmes. Again, in those countries on which the Council has imposed an arms embargo, good stockpile management must be required for the transfer of arms and the provision of assistance by security forces.

Costa Rica believes it is important to include the subject of small arms in the mandates and reports of political peacebuilding and peacekeeping missions. This would give a positive signal that the Security Council is aware of its responsibility in such a serious matter. We also believe it necessary for the Council to continue buttressing disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities, including destruction of arms, and reinvigorating sanctions follow-up measures connected to arms embargoes.

I will end by repeating that Costa Rica believes that the international community must adopt and implement measures to combat the illicit trade in weapons and must, essentially, strengthen substantially the regulation of any arms trade. The bodies of the United Nations must contribute to the achievement of that necessary goal.

Although undeniable progress has been made over the last decade, for example by adopting the Action Plan to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, we believe that even more progress must be made through the adoption of legally binding instruments. My country has therefore supported and contributed to the consideration of a treaty on arms trading within the framework of the General Assembly. The absence of measures ensuring mandatory compliance with Security Council measures has led to norms that have not gone beyond mere repetition of principles, and that has proved to be of very little use.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the European Union.

Mr. Serrano (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank you, Mr. President, for inviting the European Union to this important debate. I would also like to thank all those who have spoken, particularly the Deputy Secretary-General, Ms. Migiro, Executive Director Costa and the Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States, Mr. Sylvain-Goma. Their statements help us better understand the scope of the problem.

The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and members of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Serbia, as well as Ukraine, Armenia and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union (EU) is strongly committed to efforts to combat the stockpiling, uncontrolled spread and illegal trade of conventional arms. Besides the fact that they can fuel terrorism and organized crime, small arms and light weapons play a decisive role both in destabilizing and weakening States and

their social and political structures, and in triggering and spreading conflicts. They are a security problem for us all, and a major obstacle to the development of the affected countries.

That is why in 2005 the heads of State and Government of the European Union adopted a strategy to counter the illicit accumulation of and trafficking in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. The strategy promotes a comprehensive approach and seeks to mobilize all the instruments that the European Union has at its disposal to tackle both supply and demand in the small arms and light weapons trade. Almost €500 million has been allocated to small arms and light weapons programmes since 1992.

In order to deal with the problems created by the illicit trade in and excessive stockpiling of small arms and light weapons, we continue to view the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms as the most appropriate multilateral instrument. The European Union is currently designing a programme that will support implementation of the Programme at the regional level by organizing regional seminars. Three of those will cover Africa and one will deal with Central Africa. The Union will support implementation by the countries of the Great Lakes region of United Nations technical guidelines for managing the stockpiling of conventional munitions.

The European Union strategy on small arms and light weapons has a universal scope, but it identifies Africa as the continent most affected. The adoption of the EU-Africa strategy, particularly the Peace and Security Strategic Partnership — one area of which is dedicated to small arms and light weapons — has made possible a major strengthening of our cooperation at both the continental and subregional levels, complementing the efforts under way at the national level. The first pan-African cooperation programme to combat small arms and light weapons has just been launched in cooperation with the African Union, the subregions and the Police Chiefs Regional Cooperation Offices. The aim of this project is, on the one hand, to strengthen the regional police offices' capacity to conduct the fight against arms trafficking in a coordinated way and, on the other, to raise awareness among national authorities and civil society so that they can intensify their efforts.

The European Union also supports the African Union's formulation of a small arms and light weapons strategy that will include guidelines for African Union action in this area. I would also like to recall here the initiative the European Union is currently developing to combat air transport of small arms and light weapons. That project, which identifies Africa as a priority region, seeks to develop software and good practices to enhance checks on airlines suspected of such trafficking.

The Central African region has not been spared, unfortunately, by the proliferation and traffic in small arms and light weapons. In this regard, the European Union supports the request of United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security in Central Africa to the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to draft a legal instrument on the control of small arms and light weapons and to produce an action plan and a code of conduct for security and defence forces in Central Africa.

The European Union firmly intends to support every commitment made in this regard. As Mr. Sylvain-Goma said this morning, the European Union already supports the ECCAS efforts to deal with the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and we support the efforts of Central African countries to implement, at the national level, the Brazzaville Programme of Priority Activities, which is part of the United Nations Programme of Action.

The European Union is convinced that only a global approach to the problem of the proliferation of conventional arms can have a tangible impact on security. That is why we need to deal with the source of the problem by regulating international trade in conventional weapons through an arms trade treaty. The European Union is firmly convinced that a legally binding global instrument, in line with States' responsibilities under international law on this subject and establishing common international norms for the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons, will go a long way to combating the proliferation of such weapons, which is neither desirable nor responsible.

The Union is ready to work with all United Nations Member States to negotiate the terms of this international instrument within the framework of the negotiation process established by the General Assembly resolution adopted in 2009 (resolution 64/48). That process should take into account specific regional and national characteristics without

compromising the quality of the future treaty. In that regard, in 2009 the European Union encouraged discussion on a regional level through a series of regional workshops, two of which were held in Africa. We plan to repeat that initiative with regional debates on the political and technical aspects of a future arms trade treaty.

The European Union would like to take this opportunity to reaffirm its full commitment in the fight against traffic in conventional weapons, particularly on the African continent. In our conviction that the implementation of the EU-African Strategy can contribute to this goal, the Union is committed to pursuing its efforts to promote the implementation of a genuine architecture of peace and security in Africa.

The President (*spoke in French*): There are still a number of speakers remaining on my list. I therefore intend, with the concurrence of the members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3.30 this afternoon.

The meeting was suspended at 1.30 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.6288 (Resumption 1)

Security Council

Sixty-fifth year

Provisional

6288th meeting

Friday, 19 March 2010, 3.45 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Moungara Moussotsi	(Gabon)
Members:	Austria	Mr. Lutterotti
	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Mr. Vukašinović
	Brazil	Mr. Moretti
	China	Mr. Du Xiaocong
	France	Mr. Bonne
	Japan	Ms. Shiotsu
	Lebanon	Ms. Ziade
	Mexico	Mr. Puente
	Nigeria	Mr. Adamu
	Russian Federation	Mr. Kravchenko
	Turkey	Ms. Dinç
	Uganda	Mr. Mugoya
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Quarrey
	United States of America	Mr. Gordon

Agenda

Central African region

Impact of illicit arms trafficking on peace and security

Letter dated 15 March 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Gabon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2010/143)

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The meeting resumed at 3.45 p.m.

The President (*spoke in French*): I wish to remind all speakers, as I indicated this morning, that they are asked to limit their statements to a maximum of five minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously.

I now give the floor to the representative of Germany.

Mr. Wittig (Germany): I should like to thank you, Mr. President, for giving my country the opportunity to participate in this important debate.

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the European Union.

Every day, hundreds of people suffer from the consequences of the proliferation of illicit arms. Implications for economic development are obvious. Illicit arms trafficking is all too often one of the causes of humanitarian tragedies.

Germany has long been committed to a comprehensive approach to combat the destabilizing accumulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons, as well as their ammunition. My country attaches high importance to fully implementing and further developing the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. It supports the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States in New York in June 2010, which will mark an important step in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

For more than 10 years, Germany has chaired the so-called Group of Interested States in New York. This Group has offered a platform to the disarmament community based in New York to exchange views on how to cope with the scourge of small arms and light weapons.

In recent years, my country has paid particular attention to the issue of the security and thorough management of national stockpiles of conventional arms and ammunition. Under German chairmanship, a group of governmental experts drew up recommendations on the proper management of stockpiles. My Government is contributing to the ongoing United Nations-steered process leading to the development of technical guidelines for the management of stockpiles of conventional ammunition.

My country remains committed to reducing and ultimately ending the illegal global trade in small arms and light weapons. Therefore we continue to attach the utmost importance to the ongoing process towards the development of a comprehensive and legally binding arms trade treaty on the highest possible common international standards for the transfer of conventional arms. We stand ready to engage actively and to cooperate constructively in the process leading to the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty in 2012.

I should like to provide a few examples of my country's cooperation. In 2006, my Government began to support the East African Community (EAC) by implementing a project on non-proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the EAC. As a result, networks were created that paved the way for the engagement of the EAC in maintaining peace and security. The EAC has worked closely with the Regional Centre for Small Arms and Light Weapons, based in Nairobi, thus reaching out to countries in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa.

The African Union (AU) has been mandated by its member States to establish an African Peace and Security Architecture. Germany is assisting the Peace and Security Department of the African Union Commission in setting up the African Peace and Security Architecture.

One of the priority areas of cooperation in Africa is the establishment of a continental early warning system. The system will enable the Peace and Security Council of the African Union to identify the rise of a potential crisis scenario. My Government is assisting the AU in designing such an early warning system. It is also supporting the development of the police component of the African Standby Force. The project aims at providing a minimum level of civilian security in fragile post-conflict situations and at raising public confidence in the security forces.

That leads me to my last point. From the very start, Germany has supported the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). By helping societies emerging from conflict and laying the foundations for sustainable peace and development, the PBC is entrusted with a crucial contribution to international peace and security. It should therefore play a central role in fostering cohesion among political, security, development and humanitarian

actors. In that context, my Government is of the view that the PBC should strive for close cooperation with the United Nations Security Council to focus on small arms trafficking and to curb the harmful effects of these weapons.

The President (*spoke in French*): I give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

Mrs. Grau (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this important debate.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons arising from their illicit trade has devastating effects on peace, security and development in Central Africa, both in countries in conflict and in those at peace. In that region, Switzerland has long cooperated with Burundi. Our commitment is currently being furthered through our chairmanship of the country-specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission for that country. My statement will be based on our experience in the context of our activities in Burundi. I will address five points.

First, the regulation of the trade in small arms and light weapons illicit by international instruments at the global, regional and subregional levels plays an indispensable role in the fight against the proliferation of such weapons. We strongly encourage all Member States to implement and strengthen these instruments. In this respect, the negotiation of a comprehensive and legally binding arms trade treaty would represent a great step forward.

Secondly, among our priorities is the effective implementation of existing instruments relating to small arms and light weapons, such as the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument. The Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action at the national, regional and global levels will be an excellent occasion for Member States to step up their efforts.

Thirdly, arms collection campaigns have proven to be useful. However, buy-back programmes risk being counterproductive if they do not reduce demand. They may actually stimulate demand if the reward is greater than the going price for a weapon. Such initiatives should also extend to ammunition and explosives and provide for the immediate destruction of the equipment retrieved. Finally, all States must make every possible effort to respect the rule of law, ensure security for all their communities without discrimination of any kind, and complement civilian weapons collection programmes with confidence-building measures.

Fourthly, it will not be enough to address the supply in light weapons if we want to achieve sustainable improvements in the security situation in regions that are particularly affected by armed violence. We underscore the need to intervene on the demand side as well — that is, to take a comprehensive approach to the problem of armed violence.

Finally, in the Secretary-General's recent report (A/64/228) on promoting development through the reduction and prevention of armed violence, the Secretary-General calls for increased international efforts to prevent and reduce armed violence. He makes several very useful recommendations. He also welcomes the efforts undertaken in the framework of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, a diplomatic initiative launched jointly by Switzerland and the United Nations Development Programme in 2006 and signed by 108 countries to date. That process supports Governments and civil society in achieving measurable reductions in armed violence, both in conflict and non-conflict settings, by 2015. We invite all countries that have not yet done so to sign that instrument and to participate actively in the process at the regional and global levels.

I underscore once again the importance of Member States and international organizations taking a coherent, coordinated and complementary approach to the fight against armed violence in Central Africa by dealing with both the demand and the supply sides of the issue.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Congo.

Mr. Maboundou (Congo) (*spoke in French*): I would like first to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption to the presidency of the Council, and to thank you for having organized this debate on an issue of great relevance to the Central African subregion, the rest of Africa and other regions of the world affected by conflicts and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

In 2008, it was estimated that there were already 870 million firearms in circulation around the world, causing on average 740,000 deaths per year. Even in

areas free from conflict, they continue to sow death and devastation. Small arms and light weapons are easily absorbed into illegal trafficking networks. They are widely used in armed conflicts and foster cross-border crime.

For over three decades now, illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons has fed conflicts and their corresponding phenomenon, cross-border crime, in Central Africa. The subregion has been particularly hard hit by the many armed conflicts that have damaged the stability of States and destroyed their socio-economic fabric. Many such States are in post-conflict situations, while others are undertaking reconstruction and the revival of their development processes.

The persistent tensions in the subregion provide fertile soil for the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which, alongside organized crime, severely destabilizes our States and poses a serious threat to the peace and security of the subregion and to overall international peace and security.

Furthermore, the process of economic integration on which our development strategies depend has been hindered and could even be held up entirely. Indeed, the illicit circulation and proliferation of small arms and light weapons are a destabilizing factor. They promote armed violence and prolong armed conflicts. They also promote the illegal exploitation of natural resources, illicit drug trafficking, the recruitment of child soldiers, sexual violence and other human rights violations, such as illicit trafficking in children.

The unremitting armed violence and insecurity resulting from this harmful traffic have weakened the economies of most States in Central Africa, which must also face the challenge of implementing programmes for the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants. The recurrence of armed violence arising from the proliferation of light weapons in border areas, roadblocks and acts of piracy displace entire populations, making them more vulnerable and their situation more precarious. The current situation in the northern part of my country is a vivid illustration of this point.

Here, my delegation would like to reiterate its appeal for assistance for our brothers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo who have fled the hostilities there and taken refuge in the Republic of the Congo. We would also like to take this opportunity to echo the United Nations appeal for funds to relieve the suffering of the victims of armed attacks in Equateur province.

The States of the subregion have committed themselves to combating this scourge in the framework of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. Given what is at stake, they have resolved to coordinate their efforts on a regular basis within the framework of ECCAS, in which they have created a Peace and Security Department, and of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

These efforts have led to the adoption of several decisions and recommendations. I would highlight in particular the Subregional Conference on the Proliferation of and Illicit Traffic in Small Arms in Central Africa, which was held in October 1999 in N'djamena, Chad, and the meeting held in Brazzaville in May 2003 that led to the adoption of the Programme of Priority Activities for the implementation of the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

It is clear that effective control of the scourge of illicit small arms is crucial. It is through the strengthening of subregional, regional and international cooperation that our States will be able to meet the challenge of the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons. This cooperation will have to focus on exchanges of information and experience among States, on the one hand, and between States and international, regional and subregional organizations, on the other. This will be particularly true in terms of assistance being provided for the drawing up of registers of arms, lists of illegal arms brokers, and the provision of equipment and materials for border surveillance and weapons detection.

In this respect, a workshop/seminar on the fight against the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons was held on 10 March in Brazzaville by the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States. Through this workshop, the Congo obtained an electronic device to trace weapons.

Conflict prevention must also be addressed on a priority basis in order to ensure that non-State actors are unable to acquire such weapons, the destructive

effects of which have proved to be comparable to those of weapons of mass destruction. To that end, we must emphasize rigorous management of arms stockpiles, the destruction of collected illicit weapons and surplus munitions, and disarmament education by involving all national actors, in particular civil society. Furthermore, the submission and regular consideration, in the context of the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, of national reports on the implementation of the Brazzaville Programme of Priority Activities and the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is an encouraging exercise that will allow us to take stock of the progress that has been made in the fight against the scourge of arms in Central Africa.

The forthcoming ministerial meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee, to be held in April in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo, will focus exclusively on the consideration of the preliminary draft of a legally binding instrument on the control of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa, which has been drawn up at the request of the Economic Community of Central African States. As a result, my delegation hopes that the Kinshasa meeting will equip Central Africa with an ideal framework for action to better combat the scourge of the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Mr. Ileka (Democratic Republic of the Congo) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I should like to discharge the pleasant duty of conveying to you, Sir, my delight at seeing you preside over the Security Council. I am all the more gratified by your presidency as a result of the fact that you represent a country, the Gabonese Republic, with which the Democratic Republic of the Congo has long enjoyed excellent relations marked by mutual esteem and respect.

Allow me also to welcome the presence here of Ms. Migiro, Mr. Costa, Mr. Duarte and Mr. Sylvain-Goma, and to thank them sincerely for their valuable contributions to this debate.

I am from a country, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which, owing to its geographical situation and the breach of international peace and security that it has experienced, unfortunately embodies the tragedy that Central Africa has suffered as a result of the proliferation and illicit circulation of arms, in particular small arms and light weapons, to which former Secretary-General Kofi Annan once referred as African weapons of mass destruction.

Indeed, over the past decade my country has been the theatre of the most murderous war Africa has ever known. The price that has been paid by the Congolese people is unimaginable. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has suffered millions of deaths, millions of lifelong disabilities, millions of internally displaced persons and refugees, massive violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, exponential growth in the prevalence of HIV/AIDS in conflict zones, and especially — and this is of great concern for our future — the sacrifice of an entire young generation that already comprises the majority of our population and will be the Democratic Republic of the Congo of tomorrow.

I wish to spare the Council further litanies. Today, my country is in the process of reconstruction, institutional consolidation and rebuilding the nation. If this process is to be successful, we cannot sufficiently stress the imperative need to strengthen cooperation and partnership at the international level, since the fight against the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons largely transcends Central Africa and extends to the entire continent and, indeed, the entire world.

How can we face this challenge and together travel the road to normalization? In Central Africa, we require peace and stability. We require a peace to keep or build, even through political settlements likely to prevent recourse to violence and therefore the demands of a potential market for arms and ammunition. Our countries seek better cooperation with the United Nations bodies primarily responsible for dealing with small arms and light weapons: the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission, the Office for Disarmament Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, and the position currently under creation of Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict.

On the ground, we need to rethink and better populate programmes for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; disarmament, demobilization,

reintegration and repatriation or resettlement; disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation or resettlement; and security sector reform. Our States should more firmly address the supply networks for small arms and light weapons through a process of registering, tracing, marking and identifying weapons, with the assistance and support of such organizations as INTERPOL, or through international instruments under United Nations auspices, without prejudice to the relevant provisions of the United Nations Charter, their commitments vis-à-vis other existing international instruments, and of course their national security and interests.

We should also clearly identify the links between the illicit traffic in these weapons and the illegal exploitation of natural and other resources, as well as the illicit traffic in narcotics, and in response develop innovative strategies. Practical cooperation is desirable among the authorities of our States responsible for investigations, the Security Council sanctions committees, peacekeeping missions, and relevant regional and international organizations. To that end, coercive measures should be considered not only against individuals, but also against any State Member of the United Nations that violates arms embargos against conflict zones in our subregion.

The efforts of our States to combat the uncontrolled proliferation of these weapons should be based on the belief that security, development and human rights are all interconnected. Our national plans for combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons should incorporate peacebuilding efforts, gender equality, strategies for the empowerment of women, broader poverty reduction policies, and concepts of national and human security. Our States should be encouraged to strengthen cooperation aimed at the gathering, storage and exchange of data on small arms and light weapons. Appropriate training and capacity-building policies for the implementation of national arms control and reduction programmes are desirable. The task would be crushing for our States without appropriate international assistance, and it would be difficult for them successfully to implement policies for peace, stability, security and the protection of our young democracies.

To fight the scourge of the illicit traffic in weapons, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has undertaken remedial measures, some of which will become preventive in the future and all of which are aimed at strengthening our capacity to counter the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and to reduce armed violence. My country has thus acquired an institutional framework, inter alia, through the creation of a national commission for the control of small arms and light weapons and the reduction of armed violence. With the assistance of the United Nations system, the European Union and a number of non-governmental organizations, and with the support of certain States, including the United States, Belgium and France, my country has taken myriad legislative measures, bolstered its operational capacities and, finally, undertaken appropriate steps in terms of information exchange and the maintenance of registries on the control, seizure, confiscation and destruction of weapons. By way of illustration, in 2009 our country destroyed over 100,000 weapons and 480 tons of munitions. Furthermore, a weapons-marking operation was launched on 20 February.

I would also briefly like to mention the efforts made in awareness-raising and community disarmament under the aegis of the Government by the Ecumenical Programme for the Transformation of Conflicts and Reconciliation. Moreover, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has signed and ratified all the legal instruments of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) in this field. With regard to Congolese law, as the Council is aware, duly constituted international treaties and agreements take precedence over national law.

I can assure the Council that the States members of ECCAS — which, as its Secretary-General has mentioned, include almost a dozen countries, more than half of which were in conflict situations not long ago — understand perfectly the seriousness of the problem of the illicit traffic in weapons. Our countries are pursuing cooperation in the context of both ECCAS and the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, which was established as a framework for coordination in May 1992 by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

Working in close cooperation with the Department for Disarmament Affairs, as many delegations have mentioned, next month my country will host the Committee's thirty-first ministerial meeting, which will focus almost exclusively on a draft legal instrument on the control small arms and light weapons in Central Africa, their ammunitions and any equipment that might be used in their manufacture.

Having said that, I cannot but express my great satisfaction and gratitude to you, Mr. President, for your timely initiative to convene today's meeting of the Council. I very much hope that it will contribute to sustaining and strengthening the solidarity of the Security Council and the international community with the Central African region with a view to eradicating the illicit traffic in these weapons.

If I may just exceed a bit more the time that has been given to me, I wish to inform the Council that my country will host a regional preparatory meeting in Kinshasa in connection with the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, to be held in New York in June. I should like in advance to thank the delegations that will join us and the Department for Disarmament Affairs in ensuring that the Meeting can take place, thereby underscoring their resolve and commitment to succeed in defeating a traffic that all of us deplore.

In conclusion, I should like to associate myself with all the calls on the international community to provide the Central African region all the assistance requested in effectively coordinating the fight against the illicit traffic in weapons. The commitment of the Security Council is crucial to that end. Our countries have already welcomed the felicitous partnership that has been established between the United Nations and the ECCAS. However, if we wish to work to resolve the problems posed by the illicit traffic in weapons at the national, regional and international levels in order to produce the greatest benefit for our countries and peoples, that partnership deserves to be built upon, and even strengthened, with regard both to the necessary coordination of United Nations efforts and to broader and more effective cooperation with regional organizations.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Republic of Korea.

Mr. Kim Bonghyun (Republic of Korea): Allow me, first, to convey my delegation's sincere appreciation to you, Mr. President, for the holding of today's open debate on the impact of illicit trafficking in small arms on peace and security in the Central African region. My delegation believes that today's debate is both timely and relevant, considering the challenges that we face not only in Central Africa but in all corners of the world. I would also like to express our gratitude for the continued interest of the Council on this issue, as well as for the work of the Secretary-General in raising public awareness on this matter by publishing biennial reports, which I believe will be circulated in the near future.

Small arms and light weapons are the weapons of choice in many present-day conflicts. Their widespread availability and excessive accumulation contribute to the prolongation of violence and the aggravation of regional conflicts. Illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons is often closely linked to organized crime, terrorism and drug trafficking. Furthermore, it is also associated with various development, human rights and humanitarian problems, such as child soldiers, refugees, food insecurity and the illegal exploitation of natural resources. Preventing the illicit flow of small arms is key to addressing those multifaceted issues.

We greatly appreciate the efforts being made by the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), especially its work on a legally binding instrument on subregional monitoring of the illicit traffic in small arms, ammunitions and related material. That is not only necessary for the region, but it is also in line with the global trend to regulate the illicit flow of conventional arms. We would also like to commend earlier initiatives by African States, such as the Bamako Declaration, the Nairobi and Southern African Development Community Declarations and Protocols, and the Economic Community of West African States Convention.

My delegation is particularly pleased with the Council's continued interest in addressing the issue of small arms since its first thematic debate in 1999, considering its potential to impede the Council from fulfilling its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. I would especially like to emphasize the importance of ensuring the effectiveness of the Council's arms embargo, not only because of its direct effects in curbing illegal arms transfers but also because of its far-reaching impact on the work of the Council, including its peacekeeping activities.

Also within the framework of the United Nations, in June we will have an opportunity to strengthen our joint efforts to address issues concerning small arms at the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States, as well as to consider the national, regional and global

implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In that regard, I would like to commend the extensive consultations being undertaken by Mexico as the Chair of the Fourth Meeting. I would also like to reiterate my delegation's full support for the success of the Meeting.

My delegation would also like to point out that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 64/48, the preparatory committee meetings for the United Nations Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty will start in July 2010, with a view to establishing a legally binding instrument on the highest possible common international standards for the transfer of conventional arms. Considering the grave impact that the illicit traffic in small arms has on peace and security in all regions, including Central Africa, I believe that small arms should fall within the scope of the arms trade treaty.

Among the various aspects concerning illicit trafficking activities, my delegation would like to point out the importance of preventing and combating the illicit brokering of all conventional weapons, including small arms. From that standpoint, the Republic of Korea, together with Australia, introduced in 2008 General Assembly resolution 63/67, entitled "Preventing and combating illicit brokering activities", which was adopted by consensus. Considering its positive implications on international efforts to curb illicit trafficking in small arms, my Government would like to request the continued support of all Member States for that biennial resolution, which will next be introduced at the sixty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

Mr. Goledzinowski (Australia): First of all, I would like to commend you, Mr. President, on your timely initiative to hold this open debate on the impact of illicit small arms trafficking on peace and security in the Central African region.

We all come to this debate with our own regional and geographical perspectives. Some of those speakers who have spoken this afternoon have, of course, demonstrated a much deeper knowledge of the situation in Central Africa than Australia has. I would like to take this opportunity to formally congratulate those States on the specific measures they have listed for us here today. But equally, we all share a common purpose, as reflected in Article 1 of the United Nations Charter, to maintain peace and security, including through taking effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace.

The achievement of these goals involves building confidence between nations and developing an effective international security system. In part, this requires concerted international efforts to prevent the excessive accumulation and proliferation of conventional weapons, including the eradication of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

But regional solutions to regional problems are also critical. In this regard, Australia recognizes and commends the efforts being made in Africa to bring about sustainable peace and security. These efforts include the Economic Community of West African States Convention on Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and Other Related Materials; the Southern African Development Community Protocol on Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials; and the Nairobi Protocol for the Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa. As my Foreign Minister, Stephen Smith, said just today in a speech at Sydney University, it is difficult to imagine making progress on global issues, including disarmament, without working closely with African countries and the African Union.

In our own region, Australia, in partnership with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, hosted a Pacific regional meeting last year to further the goals of the United Nations Programme of Action. In doing so, we recognized that national security cannot be achieved in isolation from regional or global security. We also realized the importance that confidence-building and effective collective action among States plays in the pursuit of these goals.

Regional arms control arrangements, including in Africa and the Pacific, are important examples of collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to peace and security. They also underpin, in practical ways, the broader international security framework, including the key United Nations initiatives, such as the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the prospective arms

trade treaty, in that they seek to prevent the illicit or irresponsible transfer of arms.

It is in these broader international security frameworks that all Member States can contribute to strengthening cross-regional security. As United Nations Members, we have valuable opportunities this year to build on regional arms control initiatives and to further strengthen international measures. As has been mentioned by speakers before me, the Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, and also the first Preparatory Committee meeting on the arms trade treaty, provide us with an opportunity to buttress existing regional efforts and to make real international progress.

Broader efforts in the General Assembly should not be ignored either. As my colleague, the Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea, mentioned just a few moments ago, Australia and the Republic of Korea will once again be together sponsoring a draft resolution on preventing and combating illicit brokering at the Assembly's sixty-fifth session. The resolution encourages States to implement the domestic controls necessary to counter illicit trafficking, and also recognizes the key role of regional and subregional cooperation in countering that threat.

We believe that we all share the same goal. The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research identified it in the context of the arms trade treaty in its summary report on the regional seminar for countries in Central, Northern and Western Africa, but this goal is applicable across the entire arms-control agenda. The goal I refer to is working towards freeing people from fear. We look forward to working with other Member States to further advance this objective and the goals of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and of the arms trade treaty. The United Nations membership's continued and active support for these initiatives will send a strong message to would-be proliferators about the strength of international resolve to stop the illicit and irresponsible trade in conventional weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons. In doing so, we will be living up to our United Nations obligations to the maintenance of peace and security.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of the Central African Republic.

Mr. Poukré-Kono (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to convey to you, Mr. President, my warm congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for March, which you are conducting so skilfully. I would like to pay tribute to the welcome initiative of holding a public meeting on the topic of illicit arms trafficking and its impact on peace and security in the Central African subregion. I do so with pleasure, because Gabon is well known for its role as a mediator in Africa, and in the Central African Republic in particular for its involvement in the search for solutions to the Central African crisis. My delegation is grateful for all his efforts on the ground.

I am also grateful to the Deputy Secretary-General; the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Mr. Costa; the Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Mr. Sylvain-Goma; and Mr. Duarte, the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for their involvement in seeking solutions to the issue of small arms.

At a time when the international community has achieved notable progress in some parts of the world through its praiseworthy and courageous efforts to reduce if not to eradicate illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons, which has led to so much loss of life, it is powerless to address that issue in the rest of the world, especially Africa and, more specifically, Central Africa. Many actions have been taken — including confiscation, collection and incineration — and yet all have amounted to a drop in the bucket. The circulation of small arms and light weapons has gone from bad to worse, sometimes thanks to public and international services.

The possible reasons for such failures include porous borders between neighbouring countries; a lack of defence and security capacity; a lack of trust among the population; the stockpiling of unneeded weapons; trafficking in natural resources, such as precious stones, elephant ivory and animal pelts; attempts at destabilization; and so forth. My delegation can only welcome the consideration of the topic at hand, since our country is emerging from conflict with difficulty in the face of constraints beyond its control, such as the

circulation of illicit weapons throughout our territory, held by rebel groups, bandits and road blockers.

There is no need to describe the effects of this scourge on the country's people and development. In 2003, the Government of the Central African Republic, in the context of its comprehensive defence policy, placed the individual at the centre of security issues and reaffirmed its firm commitment to peace and stability efforts in Central Africa and the Great Lakes region, for the security issue in the Central African Republic cannot be analysed without taking the regional perspective into account.

Since reducing the presence of arms is essential to development, a national programme to support development by strengthening security has been launched, based on an approach integrating community policies and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process. Community policies are aimed at reducing insecurity through rehabilitation activities, post-crisis support to victims of such crises, and reducing the small arms and light weapons held illegally by civilians. DDR is aimed specifically at the ex-combatants who continue to pose a threat to civilian peace and security. We have to turn them from destructive forces to forces that can build the nation.

Consequently the restoration of security runs in tandem with civic responsibility and with DDR. From this point of view, the fight against the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is an issue not only of security but of human rights as well. A number of disarmament initiatives have been launched by the Government with the assistance of the international community, which in 2001 adopted the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, accompanied by concrete measures.

What is the result of all those recommendations? At the subregional level, the decisions of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa are sufficiently persuasive to endorse the initiatives taken at the subregional level. In fact, the member States of that Committee are on the verge of concluding the consideration of an advance draft legal instrument on the control, in Central Africa, of small arms and light weapons, their ammunition and all equipment that can be used for their manufacture. That instrument takes into account all aspects of arms from their manufacture to their sale in the markets. Moreover, it will strengthen comprehensive cooperation among Member States in the fight against the circulation of arms, transboundary crime, widespread banditry and so on.

At the national level, the Central African Republic has developed strategies that range from strengthening security cooperation with the neighbouring States to adopting laws, raising public awareness, establishing the Anti-Corruption Commission, training, and strengthening the national disarmament and reintegration programme, which was launched with the financial and technical support of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic. Because of the financing difficulties facing the Central African Republic, the implementation of such a programme requires mobilizing the financial resources of the State itself, which, unfortunately, it cannot do owing to the crisis in which it has been thrown.

To end the illicit sale of firearms, international partners should help the States of the Central African region by providing them with workable monitoring means and adequate logistical resources, that is, the requisite material means to eradicate the pandemic of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa, which means are lacking. As the States of the subregion are undertaking serious commitments on future binding legal instruments to control light weapons, the international community should help the subregion to achieve that objective.

My delegation fully associates itself with the draft presidential statement to be adopted at the conclusion of this meeting.

The President (*spoke in French*): I now give the floor to the representative of South Africa.

Mr. Paschalis (South Africa): The Security Council has been considering the issue of small arms and light weapons during regular open debates since 1999, informed by the recognition that the excessive and destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons has a direct bearing on the Security Council's mandate. Small arms and light weapons have the potential to increase the intensity and the duration of armed conflicts, undermine the sustainability of peace agreements, impede the success of peacebuilding and post-conflict reconstruction, frustrate efforts aimed at

the prevention of armed conflict, and hinder the provision of humanitarian assistance.

South Africa therefore congratulates the delegation of Gabon for taking up this important issue during its presidency of Security Council in order to, inter alia, promote international support for the efforts of the Central African countries to address a specific dynamic of this issue, namely, the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons in their region.

The issue of small arms and light weapons is complex and has a direct bearing on a number of other important policy areas, such as sustainable development, human rights, poverty and underdevelopment. It is, therefore, clear that that scourge requires attention at the national, subregional, regional and international levels in order for it to be effectively addressed. It also remains vitally important that each of the relevant United Nations organs afford the issue priority attention, based on their respective mandates and in cooperation with one another.

It is equally important for the international community, particularly the United Nations family, to render effective support to the home-grown solutions of regions and subregions, such as the Central African initiative. Legally binding agreements adopted at the subregional level represent concrete building blocks in the fight against the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons at the broader regional and global levels. In that regard, we may add that the Southern African Development Community (SADC) adopted the Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials in the Southern African Development Community Region in August 2001 as a comprehensive legally binding agreement aimed at preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, as well as at promoting greater cooperation amongst SADC member States, inter alia by enhancing and harmonizing national controls.

The United Nations Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons remains the central global instrument to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The Programme of Action represents a hard-won agreement by the international community, and its full implementation in all its aspects should remain central to all our national, subregional, regional and international efforts.

With reference to the issues addressed today, we wish to underline the importance of the General Assembly as the custodian of the Programme of Action to further explore ways to advance the synergies between the Programme's provisions on cooperation, capacity-building and assistance, on the one hand, and regional and subregional initiatives, on the other hand.

The issue of small arms and light weapons has a particular bearing on two aspects of the Security Council's mandate, namely, arms embargoes, and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) efforts. Guided by our commitment to the peaceful resolution of conflicts, we support arms embargoes that contribute to lasting peace and stability, in this case also as it pertains to the Central African region.

Our involvement in peacekeeping operations led us to recognize the value of effective DDR activities as a vital element that contributes to the success of entire peace processes. The mandates of peacekeeping operations, handed down through Security Council resolutions, need to be backed up with the system-wide resources of the United Nations so as to ensure that such mandates are sufficiently sustainable and effectively carried out.

In conclusion, South Africa welcomes today's open debate as a further opportunity for the Council and the broader United Nations membership to develop and refine our common understanding of such issues in order to contribute concretely to the attainment of peace and security in the heart of Africa.

The President (*spoke in French*): Following consultations among the members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

> "The Security Council reaffirms the statements of its Presidents of 24 September 1999 (S/PRST/1999/28), 31 August 2001 (S/PRST/2001/21), 31 October 2002 (S/PRST/2002/30) and 29 June 2007 (S/PRST/2007/24), and its resolution 1209 (1998) of 19 November 1998, welcomes all initiatives taken by Member States following the adoption of the Programme of Action by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and takes note of the progress towards an Arms Trade Treaty.

"The Security Council is gravely concerned about the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world, particularly in the subregion of Central Africa, which have a wide range of humanitarian and socio-economic consequences, in particular on the security of civilians by fuelling armed conflict, which in turn exacerbates the risks of gender-based violence and the recruitment of child soldiers and poses a serious threat to peace, reconciliation, safety, security, stability and sustainable development at the local, national, regional and international levels.

"The Security Council, while acknowledging the right of all States to manufacture, import, export, transfer and retain conventional arms for self-defence and security needs consistent with international law and the Charter of the United Nations, underlines the vital importance of effective regulations and controls of the transparent trade in small arms and light weapons in order to prevent their illegal diversion and re-export.

"The Security Council reiterates that Member States should comply with existing arms embargoes and export bans and take necessary steps to effectively implement these measures imposed by the Council in its relevant resolutions.

"The Security Council is alarmed that illicit transfers of small arms and light weapons in contravention of arms embargoes and export bans, to or by criminal organizations or other irresponsible actors, including those suspected of engaging in terrorist acts, are linked with illicit trafficking of drugs, illegal exploitation of natural resources and illicit trade in such resources. The Security Council encourages all members that have not yet done so to accede to, ratify and implement the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its protocols, including the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition.

"The Security Council welcomes the various initiatives that are currently under way within the subregion, notes the efforts to establish a subregional register of small arms and encourages the Central African countries to take necessary measures to build up the capacity of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) through the establishment of a subregional register of arms dealers as well as the elaboration of a subregional legally binding instrument on the control of small arms and light weapons, their ammunitions and all equipments that might serve for their manufacture.

"The Security Council reaffirms the importance of addressing illicit arms trafficking, in particular of small arms and light weapons, through an approach of common and shared responsibility, and encourages the States of the subregion to fully implement relevant measures adopted at the national, subregional, regional and international levels and to consider appropriate steps in this regard.

"The Security Council calls on the States of the subregion to strengthen efforts to establish mechanisms and regional networks among their relevant authorities for information sharing to combat the illicit circulation of and trafficking in small arms and light weapons. The Council also stresses the need for the States of the subregion to strengthen their cooperation, including through regional and subregional organizations, in particular the African Union, in order to identify and take appropriate measures against individuals and entities that engage in illegal trafficking of small arms and light weapons in the Central African subregion.

"The Security Council emphasizes the need for national authorities in the subregion to fully participate in the practical implementation of the Programme of Action, adopted on 20 July 2001, by the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, and the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, adopted on 8 December 2005, and encourages Central African countries to regularly submit national reports to the Secretary-General, in accordance with the abovementioned instrument.

"The Security Council encourages Economic Community of Central African States to assist Central African countries in ensuring the effective implementation of arms embargoes imposed by the Council and, in this context, to establish measures such as inquiries into illicit arms trafficking routes, the follow-up of possible violations and cooperation in border monitoring, in consultation with the countries concerned. In this regard, the Security Council encourages the committees in charge of monitoring arms embargoes in Central African countries and neighbouring countries, consistent with their mandates, to continue to include in the annual reports a substantive section on the implementation of arms embargoes, on possible violation of the measures reported to the Committees and with recommendations, as appropriate, for strengthening the effectiveness of arms embargoes. This information could also be shared with Interpol's International Weapons and Explosives Tracking System.

"The Security Council encourages the Committees in charge of monitoring arms embargoes in Central African countries and neighbouring countries, consistent with their mandates, to establish channels of communication with ECCAS, its member States and the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.

"The Security Council supports the action of the United Nations missions present in the subregion, consistent with their mandates, to assist disarmament processes in the framework of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, and calls upon international partners to assist the Central African countries to build and strengthen their capacities to set up and implement measures relating to the prevention of illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and the security and management of stockpiles of arms, especially small arms and light weapons.

"The Security Council recognizes the importance of the forthcoming United Nations Fourth Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat, and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, to be held in June 2010, and encourages Member States, including those in the subregion of Central Africa, to fully cooperate with the Chair to ensure a successful outcome of this Meeting.

"The Security Council encourages Member States to undertake vigorous actions aimed at restricting the supply of small arms and light weapons and ammunitions to areas of instability in Central Africa.

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to take into account in his biennial report, as a follow-up, the content of the present presidential statement."

This statement will be issued as a Security Council document under the symbol S/PRST/2010/6.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 4.50 p.m.